

MUNDANE FASHION: WOMEN, CLOTHES AND EMOTIONAL DURABILITY

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A. WARDROBE NARRATIVES

Julie

Louise

Hanka

Nicola

Golraz

Kathryn

Annabelle

Emma

Mary

Tanya

A.1 JULIE: Feel that - it's like not wearing anything

ABOUT JULIE

Julie is a human resources manager in her late fifties, and at the time of our interview she lived with her two sons (at university), in a rented house in a small village in South Oxfordshire. Although English by origin, Julie spent an important part of her life in France where she raised her sons with her French partner. When her boys were teenagers, Julie brought them back to England. She recently bought a house in the same village where they had lived since their return to the UK and at the time of our interview they were preparing for the move.

PREPARING FOR THE INTERVIEW

Julie was one of my first clients when I lived in Oxfordshire and over several years I repaired and altered quite a few garments for her and her sons. Some of her new clothes used to go straight into my studio before she even brought them home because standard sized jacket sleeves tend to be too long for her arms. When she agreed to take part in my research, I arranged to stay with a friend nearby to be able to talk to Julie on a day when she was off work. When I arrived, she offered me a quick drink in the kitchen and after another reassurance about the interview process she invited me upstairs to her bedroom where most of her clothes were stored.

JULIE'S WARDROBE

I regret you not being around she tells me as we start talking about the most recent addition to her wardrobe, *because this one, actually, it's nice and silky, it's just that bit too long* [Figure A.1]. She is showing me a white blouse that comes as a set with a sleeveless jumper. Julie seems to like the material a lot, and has worn the blouse a few times already, yet she still seems unsure about the length of the blouse which she suspects may look better on a taller person. *This bit is virtually at my knees*, she says laughing. Another new piece is a thick woollen sweater which she loves. The only problem is that the material turns out to be a bit itchy, so she has to wear a long-sleeved T-shirt underneath [Figure A.2]. Although the blouse was clearly bought for work, the thick jumper is *a weekend one*, she says.

There are some things that are very definitely not weekend. No! The other way around - which are very definitely not work. Like I wouldn't wear that for work. But also, temperature wise - as that's a consideration too. Because weekends I tend to, if I'm here, it's a lot colder than if I'm at work where the heating is much higher. Yeah, so a sweater like that I would just die of heat at work. But also, I wouldn't really feel comfortable wearing something like that at work.



Figure A.1



Figure A.2

Work wardrobe

Julie's job requires a professional wardrobe and so she generally makes a very clear distinction between her work outfits and her weekend clothes. Although some of her clothes might be suitable for both, she often feels unsure about styling options and combinations. For example, as we talk, she shows me a new jacket she bought but has not worn yet because she does not know *how to wear it* [Figure A.3]. When I make a few suggestions for dressing the jacket up and down with some things she already owns, she seems both pleased and surprised. *I can't even see it but you're right!*, she says, *it does look better [laugh] but I just can't see these things*.

Comfort

One of Julie's main considerations for choosing new clothes is comfort and softness of material. Whereas when she was young, it was not unusual *to lay on the bed for half an hour tryin' get our jeans zip up*, the priorities are different now. *I REALLY REALLY love wearing things that feel nice and are super-comfortable*; and a top she often uses for work as it is *very comfortable to wear* is a good example. It might work with the white jacket - she tries to match the two and encourages me to feel for myself: *Feel how soft it is! Feel that - it's like not wearing anything*. [Figure A.4].



Figure A.3



Figure A.4

Similarly, there is a dress which she says *feels gorgeous*. Julie bought it because she *loved the feel of it* when she tried it on, and she also liked the *brownie-taupe* colour [Figure A.5]. She also has one similar that is *comfy* and good for work [Figure A.6].

Okay, this is last year's - it's only last year's but I still love it. This is a work dress. Same colour, as you see. It's either that or black or navy. That hangs really nicely, and it doesn't crease. So, well it does a little bit but then it'll fall out, you know.



Figure A.5



Figure A.6



Figure A.7

Julie also shows me another one that she bought while she was living in France and one more of the same style in black that she also likes wearing to work. Laying all these dresses out on the bed next to each other she notices how very similar they are, and it suddenly makes her laugh [Figure A.7]. *It's funny, actually, isn't it?, I'm not very adventurous...I stick to wearing what I find comfortable*, she smiles. Comfort is also a reason why she does not wear some of her clothes at the moment. Several of her more fitted work dresses feel a little tight around her waist right now and although she could still fit into them without a problem, the tight feel makes her uncomfortable about wearing them. Her description also shows how subtle details may influence this feeling in quite a significant way.

That's quite a nice dress but it's a little on the tight side. Oh, and it's got that as well [showing the slit – Figure A.7]. So, you have to kind of feel comfortable in the first place because that flaps [laughs], so if you're already thinking it's a bit tight around your tummy and then you're flashing your legs at the same time [laughs again] it's not a nice feel.

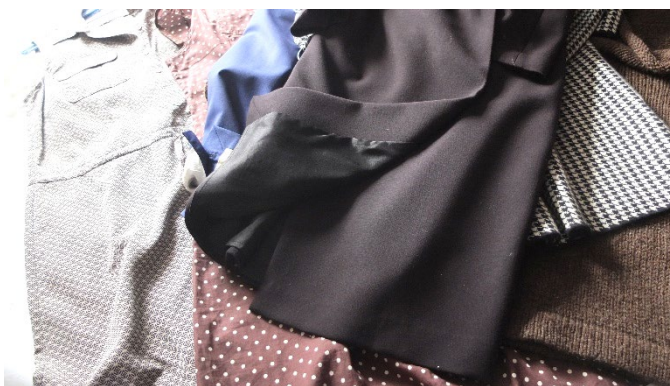


Figure A.8

Clothes shopping

Julie does not particularly enjoy clothes shopping and would therefore really appreciate having someone with her for *honest feedback*. Styling advice would also be welcome as she admits to owning more clothes like the white jacket [Figure A.3] that she had bought but has not worn yet because she does not quite know how. Her dislike of shopping also means that she does not always try things on in shops: *sometimes I'm guilty of seeing something in the shop that I think is lovely - looks lovely - so I find the right size and buy it...whereas obviously I should try it and think of the things I have*. She also admits to not being very adventurous in her choice, *I do fall for things on the hanger before I've even tried them [laugh]...and that's probably why I always stick to the same things*. Interestingly, this is why she sometimes prefers buying on-line. Having the possibility to try the clothes on in the comfort of her own home gives her more time for a decision *because it's easier for me to try it on if I am home and got it*. While she would be unlikely to return clothes bought in a shop because it requires the extra effort and time of going back, Julie finds it quite easy to return things bought on-line and has often done so.

By her own admission, her lack of confidence in styling is also reflected in her muted colour palette. Although she likes wearing stripes and has several Breton stripe tops that she often wears at

weekends, *in general I don't tend to have multi-coloured anything, do I?*, she comments. The one exception is a jacket that she bought at a shopping trip with a friend who is extremely interested in fashion and likes to experiment with colours and different styling options. They both tried on and ended up buying the same jacket *she said you should you should you should*, Julie remembers, *because I would normally never go for something this colour*. Despite this, Julie has worn the jacket a lot, so much so that the fabric now looks worn out and shiny [Figures A.9-10] and the contrasting lining on the cuffs which she used to wear turned up has gone almost grey and does not come out when dry cleaned. *It's such a shame, isn't it?*, she sighs.

And this kind of detail - you know, I appreciate [showing mismatching buttons on the cuff – [Figure A.11]]. So that kind of thing I appreciate and very often, you know, that kind of comes with expensive pieces as opposed to cheaper dresses. So, I think I can feel when I'm wearing them that they're well-made and that I appreciate. But not just for the sake of it being a Paul Smith or whatever. Because, I mean, that doesn't interest me one way or the other really. I don't know enough about them to know much about their designs and I don't follow them.



Figure A.9



Figure A.10



Figure A.11

Oldest clothes

Just like with the jacket that is now practically worn out, when Julie finds clothes that she likes a lot she tends to *wear them and wear them and wear them and forget to wear something different*. She has had a few clothes like that in the past but because both her return to the UK nearly ten years ago and also her preparations for the upcoming move required downsizing and reconsidering her wardrobe, she has not kept many of her older items. Currently, her main storage consists of two built-in wardrobes located in her bedroom and partly shared with her sons. For the last few years, the house they live in (a 17th century coaching inn) has been affected by damp and so some of her more valuable clothes remain protected by polyethylene covers.

One example is one of her oldest dresses from France which she remembers wearing frequently when her sons were little [Figure A.12-14]. She looks worried taking it out of the plastic cover and noticing that it is actually stained. However, as she starts talking about it, her face lights up with happy memories.

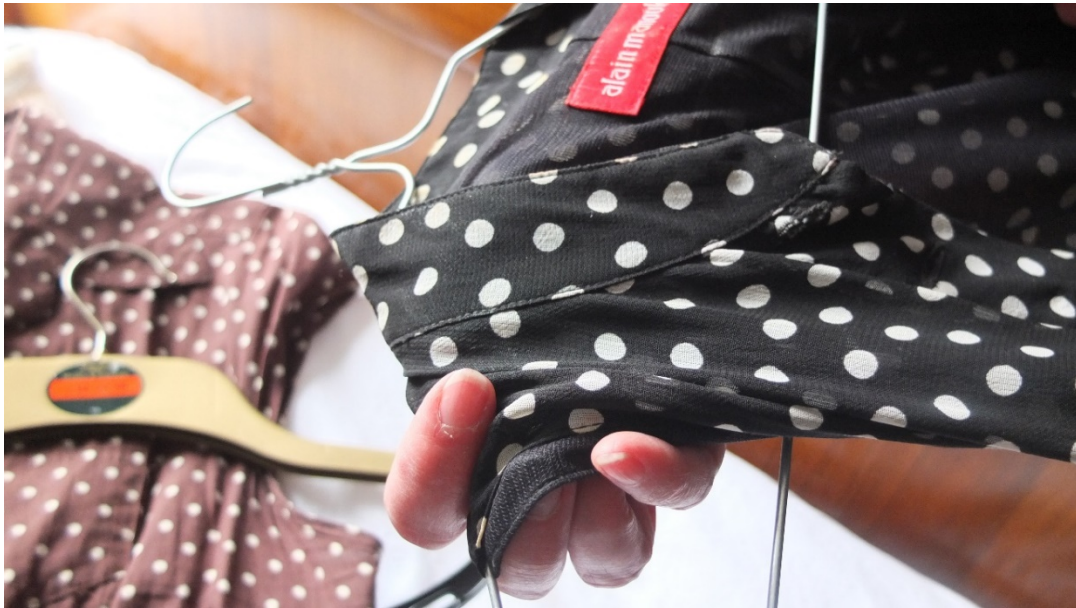


Figure A.12



Figure A.13



Figure A.14

Oh, this would never fit me now! Such a shame... It seems to be all stained around here as well, look! I'll show you a picture downstairs with it, that's very old. I'll show you and we can

work it out roughly. So, that was a wedding in Holland and how old are they [her sons in the photo]? Four, he [the younger one] looks like three, I would say. I don't know - two or three. He was so naughty! He was playing with the confetti and he kept putting it under the bride's dress - disappearing under her dress [laugh]. But that's that dress, that's why I've got kind of fond memories. Because that was such a nice occasion. Well, I've worn it lots, but I mean that was one occasion that...

There is also another one from this time that Julie remembers wearing in their garden in Paris when the boys were babies. It is a summer dress, rather short and *probably too young* for her now [Figure A.15]. There is little chance she would still be able to get it on. *I don't even know why I've still got it*, she says with surprise. These two garments are more or less exceptions as generally Julie tries to only keep the clothes she wears. When I ask if she has anything from her university years for example, she says *I really don't think I have because I chuck stuff out*.



Figure A.15

Amazing story

As she looks for some older clothes, she suddenly comes across a top which makes her eyes light up again and she tells me I gave it to her some years back [Figure A.16].

This is one that you gave me. This has been such an amazing story! And I've worn it a lot under that jacket [the Paul Smith jacket]. That's inside out - wait a minute - let me turn it round for you. Because this has been super! And it wasn't even yours, was it, originally? Was it somebody gave it to you?

[You know, I can't remember...Maybe I bought it in a charity shop...Oh yes, it was from a friend of mine! She was doing a clear out at some point and she gave it to me. You know, I liked it, but I like wearing things that are tight and I didn't like the loose fabric hanging on me. But I'm glad to hear it's worked for you.]

Well, I love it! And it's a nice material. So that's incredible 'cause that's my H&M one [pointing to a dress [see Figure A.7]] and it's so soft as well. So, I mean, you don't have to go to these lengths [pointing to the Paul Smith jacket], do you? To find a nice piece.



Figure A.16

Although this suggests that Julie does not mind wearing second-hand clothing, she never really shops for clothes in second-hand and charity shops. The combination of her dislike of shopping in general and her lack of confidence in *mixing and matching* older and newer pieces means that she feels she just does not have the patience to *rummage through* large quantities of second-hand clothes. So,

despite the success of the second-hand cowl neck top [Figure A.16], most of Julie's more formal work items come from well-known designer brands, as these perhaps more reliably guarantee the desired result. A work dress from Ralph Lauren is a good example [Figure A.17].



Figure A.17

That's very comfortable to wear because it's a bit stretchy. That suits me, do you think? I can feel that it was quite well made - it's a heavy one and it's cut in such a way that it hangs nicely. Yeah, I like that one.

Her description of this dress is just another confirmation that soft material and comfortable fit are key factors for Julie. When she feels good and comfortable in an item of clothing, she does not particularly care if the piece is second-hand, if it comes from a high street chain or if it is an expensive item from a well-known designer. However, as she also appreciates quality of construction and detail, when possible she opts for more expensive items that more reliably match her expectations in this respect.

A.2 LOUISE: I just like it because it's been worn before

ABOUT LOUISE

Louise is a French tutor in her early thirties and lives with her partner and son in their house in a small village in Kirklees, West Yorkshire. She is French by origin and moved to the UK with her partner just over ten years ago, for the second part of his degree. After they both finished their UK studies, they decided to stay. Louise is now working part-time and looks after their young son.

PREPARING FOR THE INTERVIEW

We arranged to meet on a late weekday morning when Louise's son is usually asleep. Although we were prepared for the alternative of having to divide our conversation in two or more instalments in case the baby wakes up, this did not happen, and Louise and I were able to talk in one uninterrupted session. She greeted me at the door with a wide smile and offered me a cup of coffee which we had together in her sitting room. She seemed both slightly nervous and curious about the interview, so we used this time to discuss any questions she had.

Like some of my other interviewees (Julie, Emma, and Kathryn), Louise felt she did not really have interesting clothes. I therefore reassured her that I was interested in her wardrobe as a whole and the clothes she wears on a regular basis, not necessarily in any extraordinary pieces. Just like before all my other interviews, I also reiterated that she will be able to withdraw any images or parts of the transcript that she would prefer me not to use. However, she turned out to be extremely comfortable with both photography and audio recording from the very beginning. Soon she invited me upstairs, into the bedroom, where most of her clothes are kept.

LOUISE'S WARDROBE

The main storage for Louise's clothes consists of a large built-in wardrobe in the bedroom, divided equally between her and her partner. Many of her clothes are between ten and fifteen years old. Louise still keeps and wears several items from her teenage years in France. The pair of trousers she was wearing at the time of the interview, for example, is one that she has had for nearly fifteen years [Figure A.18].

This pair of trousers is the only one I wear. They're so old - this is Benetton, right? And I got that [thinking]...so, I'm going to be thirty-one this year, I'm thirty and my mum actually bought that for me when I was about sixteen?! So, they're so old and I didn't wear them for a long time. But I kept them anyway because I thought it's good quality. And then one day I found it in my mess [laugh]. I was like - wow! And I wear it all the time! Because it's so comfy - it's just so comfy! Yeah, it's a good shape and it's good quality as well. So, you can tell I've had it for so long and I wear it almost every day [laugh].

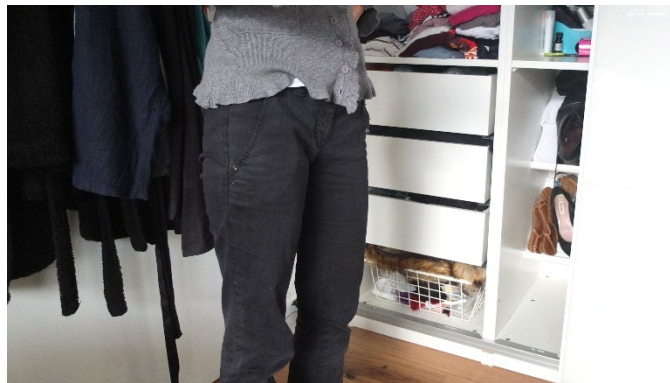


Figure A.18

Apart from these, she also has one much older pair of trousers which she still likes wearing in the summer [Figure A.19].

I've got things like that - these were my pants once! And this is twelve years old, the size, right? So, I got them when I was twelve, these pants. Honest! And then I loved it! I just loved those pants. Anyway, it was straight and...God! It's so, I can't wear it outside now - it's full of stains and it's probably a bit pink-ish now. It's supposed to be white. But, anyway, my grandma's fixed it several times. So, she changed the zip, the button there, she had to do some work over there. Obviously - it's since I was twelve! I'm thirty now [laughs]. But I just loved it so much! And when I grew out of it she cut the bottom to make it like - a bit like you're wearing today, like a shorter pants. So, she cut the bottom so that I could still wear it. And I still wear it now [smile]. I love it! In the summer - because it's got an elastic band, so, I don't know, I like it so much. So yeah, that's a funny one. It's like a treasure hunt in my wardrobe.



Figure A.19

The advantage of old clothes

Quite early on in the interview Louise made clear that she does not like new clothes, or clothes shopping as such, because it is difficult for her to find what she would like: *I like simple clothes, you know, and I can't find anything*. This is the main reason why her wardrobe mainly consists of clothes given to her by other people, particularly her partner's mother (which she refers to as mother-in-law). Unlike Louise, her mother-in-law gets great satisfaction from clothes shopping and she often browses small French boutiques to buy presents for Louise, her partner, and their son. Louise also has several items given to her by her grandmother, who is a dressmaker, and like Louise, also likes simple, good quality clothes. Her grandmother's wardrobe is very well edited, Louise says, with about twenty pieces of clothing, about half of which she bought and the rest she made herself *because she can't find anything she likes in shops* [laughs]. Because they both have very similar figures, they can easily pass clothes to each other.

So, look at that! How cool is that?! That's sooo old [laughs]. She used to like good quality ones and keep them forever. So, yeah, you can take a picture of my lovely shorts [laughs]. When I garden, you know, and like in the summer. It's good quality. It's like - I don't know how old that is, honestly. But it's really old and it's amazing. So, she gives me lots of things! I guess now they would sell that for a lot of money, right? These high waisted ones [laughs] [Figure A.20].



Figure A.20

Apart from vintage pieces like these shorts, she also has some much more recent pieces that come from her grandmother's wardrobe. Louise received several of these during her pregnancy as she did not want to buy any maternity clothes that can only be used during a very short period. Therefore, she needed clothes with adjustable features that could accommodate her changing body.

This one, she gave it to me after pregnancy because of the elastic band [Figure A.21]. It's Zara, but you know it was - she's worn it a lot, so it's a little bit damaged. But it was perfect. I loved it afterwards because of the elastic band and now it's too light, you know, it's not warm enough. But that's worked a lot.



Figure A.21

Several other items in Louise's wardrobe are from her mother, her sister and her best friend. Many of these handed down clothes are up to forty years old. One of Louise's favourite pieces is a skirt that Louise remembers her mother wearing when she and her sister were children [Figure A.22]. Because of the style and the little pearls at each end of the drawstring [Figure A.23], Louise used to

call it the Pocahontas skirt and she felt very excited when her mum finally offered to pass it on to her.

It was just, you know, so cool! I loved it. (...) And I used to call it the Pocahontas skirt when I was little. And when I was old enough my mum said: do you want it? And I said: yeah! I've always dreamt of having your Pocahontas skirt! [laughs] So, I've worn that a lot, a lot, a lot. Especially when I was pregnant because it can extend. Unfortunately, that destroyed the skirt. It's stretched. And you can tight it a bit but it's just - it's lost its glory [laughs]. And also, it's broken here [a part of the hem is unravelling]. So, I suppose that can be fixed. But yeah, it's lost, you know, the little pearl that made it this - that gave it it's Pocahontas style.



Figure A.22



Figure A.23

Despite the lost pearl, she is keeping the skirt because it has served her well and so it might be useful again sometime in the future: *you never know*. All the inherited clothes that Louise so enjoys wearing indicate that she is not too concerned about the latest trends and she is also adamant that she is not interested in fashion or fashion brands at all. However, she still seems to have a very clear idea about her own style and the kind of clothes she likes or dislikes. While a considerable part of her wardrobe consists of gifts and clothes that were handed down to her, she does occasionally buy new clothes as *treats* for herself. She admits that in the past her clothes shopping included *a few failures*, but these were much more frequent when she was younger. When she buys new clothes now, she tends to wear most of them.

Louise likes prefers things that are versatile and can be worn in different contexts across the seasons. Some years ago, she bought a white top with broderie anglaise front and sleeve details. She likes it very much because it is a little bit different but still very simple and therefore it gets worn very often [Figure A.24]. Another treat she bought for herself was a denim dress that she wanted for a long time [Figure A.25]. She is very satisfied with her choice because she finds she can wear this dress both at work and at home and so it gets worn frequently.



Figure A.24



Figure A.25

Colours (Yellow)

One thing Louise also loves are bright colours, especially yellow. She adores the yellow colour of the jumper [Figure A. 26] she bought about five years ago and says she consciously tries not to wear it too often as she realised she wears it in too many photos.

This one was a treat. I was with a friend in what is called House of Fraser, where I never go because it's just too expensive. And they had some sales on and I love yellow! It's my favourite colour [laughs]. And I don't know, I spotted that one and it looked like good quality for once. Because, you know, at least it will last longer. And I don't know - I like the colour and since then I wear it all the time. And it's still not broken anywhere, so that's good. I love it! I love it. Obviously, it needs ironing. (...) It's cute! And it's just so nice and soft, you know. And I like the design, so, yeah, that's probably one of my favourite clothes. When I travel I usually wear that top. I'm a bit boring.



Figure A.26

Simple

Apart from colours, what is very important to Louise is simple style and straight cut. She prefers plain elegance and does not like extravagance in material or design. For this reason, she truly likes her plain blue dress that she once bought to wear for special occasions and has worn it often since [Figure A.27]. Apart from the subtle horizontal pattern, the dress is quite plain, cut straight and finishes just over the knee.

That one I love! I wear it every time there's something going on, like, I don't know...That's from TK Maxx, I think, but I don't know the brand. I don't know brands, really. So, I just got it because it looks nice and if there's a wedding and event - something, I'd wear that one. That's my go to dress. [laughs] Because it's nice - simple, you know. And it fits well.



Figure A.27

One of her favourite skirts, that was a gift from her mother-in-law, is also a perfect example of her favourite simple style. As she shows it to me, she suddenly notices a missing button [Figure A.28-29].

That I wear all the time as well. Yeah, it's nice - because it's simple! Straight, simple - so yeah, that's what you want. So that I wear a lot and she gave me that. I've lost a button here - brilliant! It's probably here somewhere. I would still wear it, I don't care [laughs] but it's... Yeah, I don't know where the button is as well, so that's another problem, I suppose.



Figure A.28



Figure A.29

The lost button does not particularly worry her because she normally wears this skirt with a jumper that covers the top. However, in case that some of her clothes need similar minor repairs, it is usually her partner who takes care of them because Louise herself does not sew. When they need more complicated repairs or alterations, Louise tends to wait for a trip to France to ask her grandmother for help. But if the repair is more urgent, like last summer when her only summer jacket tore when she was leaning over the pram, she uses the local clothes repair shop.

Other key considerations for Louise are the softness of material and comfort. Soft touch, she thinks, explains her love of second-hand clothes because they would have softened through wear and repeated washing. She is conscious that quality plays a critical role here *'cause if you wash a Primark top fifteen times then it would be dead, right? - it wouldn't be soft [laughs]*. However, the clothes passed onto her by her mother in law and other family members have all stood the test of time, just like this work dress that she loves [Figure A.30].

That one is from my mother in law as well, but that's old. She had it when she was a young girl and she adjusted it for me. That's very old - you can tell, you know [laughs], and it's just really nice. She said: ah, do you want it? So, I tried it on and it was a bit too wide, so she did that [showing how it's been taken in – [Figure A. 31]]. She took it to someone who did that to make it a bit more, a bit tighter. And it's really, really nice. I love it!

[So, do you actually wear it?]

At work, yeah, because it is a bit - it's not the most, the comfiest one when you spend your life on the floor crawling [with her young son]. But at work I do wear it. I like it. I like that [showing the detail of the bows] - I think it's cute. And it's old. You know, I just like it because it's been worn before. I don't know, I find that cool [laughs]. Someone loved it and now I love it and maybe someone else will love it one day.



Figure A.30



Figure A.31

Revealing

Appropriateness to social context is another concern for Louise, as she finds that some of her older clothes and a few of those given to her by others are too short or *too showing* to be worn in public. *Some people don't care*, she laughs, *but I would NEVER go out with it 'cause it's too short, you know, and I'm considerate of these things*. She also makes clear distinction between her wardrobe for home and for work, particularly for professional recognition. *I try to look my age, [laughs] especially when I'm at work - to gain some respect, you know [laughs] because I look, I could look like I'm eighteen couldn't I?*, she explains.

Having a young child has also influenced her preferences:

I live my life on the floor. Before I used to wear sometimes tight things that were not that comfy but I thought - ah, I can live with that ... now - NO!, I want something comfortable.

This is also one of the main reasons why she has not recently worn another of her favourites, a cool brushed leather skirt with two metal clasps [Figure A.32-33].

That one I love, an old one from my mother-in-law. And I guess I love it because it was the first skirt that her dad got her when she was probably eighteen? So, it's really old. You know, she's in her sixties now. But look at that! (...) Look - you can remove the buttons here like that. And you've got little buttons here as well. I didn't wear it for a while because it's quite tight [laughs] and I couldn't really breathe when I had it on. So, that was a concern. But I think it would fit me now, so I should really get back to wearing it. I don't know - I like it. It's cool, you know, with a black top or something. And it's so old and it's funny. Yeah, I like this one. I've worn it a lot before and then I'll probably go back to wearing it now. But I'm thinking - yeah, it's open here, so I don't know. We shall see. You know, at work I want to be comfy but smart and not showing off everything [laughs].



Figure A.32



Figure A.33

Practical considerations

Related to this are other practical considerations like ironing. As a mother of a young son Louise feels that her time is precious and so she tries to keep any menial tasks to a minimum. *When I have free time, I don't want to spend it ironing*, she admits without a hesitation. Her effort to limit ironing also influences the frequency with which she wears some of the pieces that she may otherwise like: *I think that's quite cute, I like it, but, you know when you wash it you have to iron it, so that makes me not wear it very often because every time I take it I'm like - ufff! - I'll have to iron it afterwards [laughs].*

Another factor that affects the frequency of wear of some of her lighter pieces is the Yorkshire climate which is rather different to warm French summers: *I brought all my summer clothes and then I realized - oh! - I moved to Yorkshire* [laughs]. This also applies to quite a few of the gifts from her mother-in-law, who often does not realise how significant the differences in the weather can be. However, Louise also repeatedly comments that some of the gifts from her mother-in-law as well as from her own mother are just *not me*. Her description of a fluffy top that her mother-in-law gave her some years back well captures how she feels about some of these gifts: *I would NEVER wear something like that - it's just not me! - I'd look like a bird!* [Figure A.34]. Her facial expression as she shows me this top speaks for itself.



Figure A.34

Despite all this, Louise is grateful to her mother-in-law because she appreciates her best intentions. She also admits that often her mother-in-law *finds treasures* for her. For example, there is a dress that she used to love wearing to work because *it's like not wearing anything, it's so nice to wear*. It was again quite light, so Louise could combine it with a colourful cardigan, and it looked *pretty* and *cool* [Figure A.35]. In addition, some of Louise's all-time favourites also come from this source. This includes her most loved piece, a black day skirt by Sisley, that her mother-in-law (now in her sixties) used to wear as a student [Figure A.36]. Louise wears this one all the time and so when I visited the skirt was in the dryer. However, she kindly offered to show it to me in the kitchen at the end of our interview.



Figure A.35



Figure A.36

It's awful, it used to be black and now it's grey? So, my favourite clothes, well, they're probably not the prettiest. [laughs] (...) My favourite black skirt - it's easy to wear it, it's straight and I wear it at work with anything. It's very old, right? You see, it was really black, but I don't know - I love it! It's so versatile! And it's just, oh, I love it! So, that I've been wearing for, you know, since I've met my partner. Probably good fifteen years. [laughs] And look at that! It's still good!

Second-hand clothing seems to possess the kind of reassuring familiarity that Louise likes. Long history of wear and washing not only softens the materials but it often also gradually reshapes each

item so that it almost adjusts to the body. *You put it on and it's like a second skin really*, she says with a broad smile.

A.3 HANKA: I wear an apron over it and I truly feel like a star

ABOUT HANKA

Hanka is a geologist in her late thirties and she lives with her husband and three children aged seven, five and three in a small rented house in a little hamlet under the Malvern Hills. For the last seven years, she has stayed at home to look after the children but now hopes to return to work when her childcare commitments allow her to do so. Her doctor-husband currently works in a hospital too far away for a daily commute and so he only comes back home at weekends. Hanka is Slovak-Hungarian by origin and before she moved to the UK with her Czech-Austrian husband, over ten years ago, she also lived in Austria, Czech Republic, Germany, and South Africa.

PREPARING FOR THE INTERVIEW

I have known Hanka since my student years in Prague and later she commissioned me to make her wedding dress. This long-term relationship provided the rapport needed for my research and it also enabled me to interview Hanka despite her busy lifestyle that would otherwise hardly allow the time or concentration to take part in a research project of this kind. To allow the flexibility in fitting our conversation around her childcare commitments, I arranged to stay with Hanka for three days so that we can talk as and when she can. During this time, we had an opportunity for one longer conversation of just under two hours as well as three shorter instalments to expand on some of the topics we discussed in the longer session. Staying at Hanka's house also gave me a chance to explore most of the items we talked about in much more detail than most research interviews would allow, and it also enabled me to see Hanka's clothes in the context of their daily use. For example, I watched her quickly putting on the clothes from the previous day for the morning school run during which she often has to pick up and carry her still sleepy youngest son and, as she says, often ends up with mud marks from his shoes on her top. When she returns home, finally also having time for her morning coffee, she can give a bit more thought to her outfit for the day and *make a bit more of an effort* if she has the energy.

HANKA'S WARDROBE

Since Hanka arrived in the UK with her husband, they have lived in more than six locations, moving frequently for the specialist training he was undertaking. This nomadic lifestyle also affected Hanka's wardrobe because every move meant reconsidering which clothes she still wears and values, to decide if they are worth moving to the next location. She did not keep many clothes from the time before she came to the UK. She explains this by the fact that at that point she mostly had clothes from high street and second-hand shops. Only after they first moved to Worcestershire, a couple of years before her first son was born, she started getting better clothes that she values more. This time corresponds with the start of her professional career in the UK after finishing her second MA in hydro-geology. It also coincides with Hanka's discovery of an independent local boutique that promoted small labels with a strong focus on provenance and natural materials. Hanka soon befriended the owner and was a frequent visitor and customer. Although *the boutique*, as she refers to it, no longer exists, it is obvious that it played an important role in shaping Hanka's wardrobe through nurturing her interest in small, edgy labels with a strong focus on quality and brand narrative. She mentions *the boutique* repeatedly during our conversation. Her discovery of the Scottish label Brora Cashmere also falls into this time. Her fortunate win of a voucher that enabled her to buy her first Brora items led to her lasting loyalty to the quality and the longevity the brand stands for.

In their current house, the storage for Hanka's clothing is quite limited. She does not have a wardrobe of her own. Her folded clothes are stored together with her husband's in two open shelves in their bedroom. As she starts talking about her recent purchases she first pulls out some of her daughter's dresses that are stored in a built-in wardrobe in her children's bedroom together with her own dresses, coats, and other hanging clothes. The first thing she shows me is a coat that she bought because she *really loved the fabric*. However, now she is not quite sure about its size, she thinks it is a bit too big for her perhaps. Her face lights up though with the next item she comes across., *Here is my favourite summer dress*, she proudly tells me [Figure A.37].



Figure A.37

I bought it before the summer, in a summer sale. It's from TOAST and it's like, it's a night dress/lounge wear and that's why, you know - their day dresses are normally quite expensive, but pyjamas and night dresses are a bit more affordable. So, this one was on sale for £35 or £30? And it's a beautiful linen and when I was in Slovakia, I wore it as a dress and then I also slept in it, and then, you know, I hardly every took it off [laughs]. It didn't matter at all - only that it needed washing after a while. And I wear an apron over it and I truly feel like a star [smiles].

On-line shopping

Having mostly lived in the countryside for the last few years, and especially because it is hard to go clothes shopping with three young children, Hanka now buys almost all her clothes on-line. I recall a conversation Hanka and I had a few years back when she tried to talk me out of my reluctance to include an on-line shop to my studio website. As I made clear earlier, personal contact with my clients has always been key to my studio philosophy and I am still inclined to think that it is extremely difficult to make choices about fabrics and clothing without the opportunity to see them in real life, to touch, to feel and try them on. Yet, Hanka also tried to make me understand that despite her fully

appreciating my reasoning, many women like her, who would perhaps love to buy what I make, may simply not be in the position to shop for clothes in the way they might ideally imagine. The possibility to shop on-line, she argued, gives them the option to buy clothes they would otherwise not have access to. The coat she shows me is a good example [Figure A.38].

This is my favourite coat, an autumn coat. I bought it through Vestiaire Collective - do you know that website? Well, I don't know how I first found it, but that's where I bought this coat because I wanted one that was like cross-seasonal. But, you know, I couldn't find anything decent on e-Bay and this looked quite reasonably priced, something like £40 or so. And it didn't look particularly appealing in the photo but then when it arrived, I was super excited by the quality and the cut - the whole of it. It looked so much better when it arrived - amazing!



Figure A.38

Another item worth noting in this context is a dress that Hanka bought when they lived in Aberdeen, because she *needed inspiration* [Figure A.39]. She says she knew the label (Lowie) from *the boutique* and so she looked it up on-line and bought this dress on sale. She hands the dress over to me and when she sees me exploring the side seams, she suddenly says: *the only fault of this dress* is that it doesn't have pockets. The explanation that follows is also interesting:

I don't know, it was, not this summer but somehow before then - spring or summer. So, I bought it and then when I tried it on, I wasn't quite [sure]... So, I did not wear it one summer at all and then last summer I got it out and I wore it all through the summer. I wore the white linen one and a couple of others and I feel so very good in this one now. It's like, in the summer, you just put it on, and you don't need to worry about anything.



Figure A.39

Hanka's description of not liking the dress at first but then rediscovering it a year later, the dress suddenly becoming one of her favourite things to wear, reoccurs throughout our conversation and it also strongly resonates in other women's stories. She later shows me several similar examples of items that may not have fully captured her imagination initially but over the time she found ways to wear them and so they became staples in her wardrobe. A Breton stripe dress, also bought on-line, fits into this scenario. The way she feels about it now is clear from the expression on her face [Figure A.40]:



Figure A.40

This is a simply fantastic summer dress! Well, this one, the material is just great! And I thought to myself, well, how come she's putting these plastic buttons here [on the shoulders]? It's Margaret Howell. It was, I think, it's a collection from two years ago and someone bought it and I guess they didn't feel good in it, so they put it one e-Bay at a reasonable price. And when I first put it on, I wasn't quite sure about the length and everything but then I wore it in Slovakia in summer and it feels so nice! And one feels really good in it. Well, it's really good and fits well.

Hanka is well aware of similar changes in preferences that seem to happen with time. She also show me several things which once belonged to her absolute favourites, yet she does not enjoy wearing them anymore. There is a tartan shirt dress which she used to like a lot and *felt really well in it*. She puts it on, as if to try and see if she can re-remember that feeling, but she looks unsure [Figure A.41]. When she was expecting her first son, she tells me, she wore this dress so much that it started coming apart at the centre back seam, and she shows me how she repaired it [Figure A.42]. Since then, however, she wore it only very rarely. This may partly be linked to her figure changes following three pregnancies, as *one gets bigger and all*. Still, Hanka does not seem to think that is the only reason.

I think it's because you wear some things and then something changes, and you stop wearing it. As if, you know, you're past that phase, just like I feel I'm past the phase of wearing this

one. There's nothing wrong with it, but somehow, I don't know - I used to put it over anything in summer, over jeans, or shorts or so and I just went out to town. I don't know why it happens.



Figure A.41



Figure A.42

She also shows me a dress of the same style, just different fabric, that she later found on e-Bay because she *loved the other one so much*. She thought she would enjoy wearing this one too, but she has hardly ever worn it though [Figure A.43], she says. As we speak, we come across other examples of such unsuccessful *re-incarnations* of favourite garments and these also later appear in

the narratives of my other interviewees. Especially interesting in this context is a jacket that Hanka bought in an attempt to replace a similar one that she loved and wore out many years ago [Figure A.44]. It turns out that the original jacket was one that we both bought as students in Prague and I later also bought the same for my mother. Since then, it turns out, all three of us literally wore the original one to pieces and we all have tried, and failed, to find satisfying replacements. *I don't know, there was something about the cut*, Hanka says, *what I liked was that it was rather light but you could put a sweater or even two under it, it was a bit oversize*. Yet, none of our later attempts, as we agree, could quite live up to our fond memories of wearing this rather ordinary and inexpensive military inspired jacket by a famous high-street brand.



Figure A.43



Figure A.44

Clothes stored away

Some of Hanka's more precious clothes such as cashmere, occasion wear, and her most expensive woollen coat, are currently stored away, partly to protect them from moths but also because they are not suitable for her current lifestyle of a stay at home mum of young children. Hanka is looking forward to the times when she will have more space to store her clothes in a way that will make everything more easily accessible. She would also like to be able to wear some of her more elegant clothes, such as her green woollen coat, but she has to wait until her children a bit older. Now, she says, *you always have to pick the kids up in their muddy boots - really - that would be the end of the coat in two months*. She also feels that it would be a shame to wear out such a nice coat on school runs, only for getting in and out of the car. On the other hand, being aware of how her preferences can also change over time, she hopes that *it isn't the case that when I can wear it again, I won't like it anymore*.



Figure A.45



Figure A.46



Figure A.47

Hanka goes to the trouble of getting her box of stored away clothes for me and she puts it on the floor in the sitting room where we have now moved for more light and space for the growing pile of clothes that she has gradually pulled out of her wardrobes. She slowly unwraps the coat sealed in two layers of protective plastic [Figures A.45-46] and tries it on with interest [Figure A.47]. It looks good but at the same time she also looks hesitant., *It seems smaller than it used to be*, she says, *well, I guess it's me putting on weight [laughs]...as it used to be somehow bigger.*

This seems to well illustrate Hanka's concerns about many other of her older clothes. After three pregnancies, she is conscious that her body shape has changed and so many of the clothes she bought before she had children do not fit her in quite the same way that they used to. While she may be able to fit into them, she says it often feels different and it is not quite what it should be. Her perception of her body has changed considerably over time, she feels: *well, I no longer dress in the same way I used to when I was twenty, because - you know - my figure has changed completely and so for example the over knee length skirts - you know - somehow it bothers me now.*

Hanka's body image also limits the frequency with which she wears her newer clothes as some of them make her feel self-conscious about her body. In the light of this, a common feature of many of

her favourite dresses is the fact that she can just *put it on quickly and not to worry* about her figure [see also Figure A.39].

It's also linen and it feels so good, it's very easy to wear [Figure A.48]. So, you just put it on and somehow, you see, it makes you - you just look much better in it. You don't need to feel self-conscious - you don't feel that it makes you bigger or smaller and it's just right. Well, I feel very good in it. For me, for my figure, it is a very good shape.

And this one is almost the same - the style, you know. You also just put it on and wear a pair of Birkenstocks and you can go shopping to IKEA [laughs]. Well, it's such a lovely material, a cotton, I think it's cotton shirting - as far as I can tell at least. But it has lovely feel to it.



Figure A.48

She particularly loves one of these dresses, which she has worn very often as a result [Figure A.49]. Again, she puts it on for me, over the clothes she is wearing. The fabric is slightly stiff now because it is linen and the dress has just been washed, but it will soften through wear, she reassures me. Hanka does not iron any of her dresses, she only dries them, as *when you can dry them outside on a windy day that's the best*. As soon as she puts the dress on, she automatically rolls her sleeves up – a habit she has with all her tops. Because the dress is a little too short, she only wears it with

trousers now, *when I' don't feel comfortable with my bottom - or just like, you know, when one wants to hide a bit*. However, she would really love if it was just that little bit longer, so that she can also wear it as a summer dress.



Figure A.49

Quality

Longevity is among Hanka's primary considerations when she buys new clothes. She appreciates clothes that *hold their quality and somehow don't age*. In this context, she repeatedly mentions knitwear from Brora Cashmere as something that *you have for life*. She now has several pieces from Brora and gradually adds to this collection because of her good experiences with those she bought previously. As an example, there is a jumper (now also packed away to protect it from moths) that she used to wear to work almost every day for two years. *Now it has some bobbles*, she says, *but they're hardly visible in the pattern and if I could be bothered to remove them it would be like new again*. Hanka has a good collection of knitwear and there are quite a few items she wants to show me. *I have quite a few sweaters that I love*, she says. Her favourite cardigan is also from Brora, she bought it on sale, and she feels it is the most beautiful colour she knows [Figure A.50]. It goes well with several of her dresses and helps her to *liven things up*. Then there is a stripy one from Margaret

Howell, made using offcuts of wool [Figure A.51] and another thick stripy one she bought from a small Spanish label because she loved the colours and the roll neck [Figure A.52]. She likes it because it is warm, *it's a bit itchy, but otherwise, I like it sometimes*, she explains. Another is for special occasions, and she again puts it on as she shows me [Figure A.53].



Figure A.50



Figure A.51



Figure A.52

Now, it doesn't really go with these stripes, so it doesn't look quite right, but I like it. It's a good colour combination and everything. You know, with a dress or even if one has a good pair of jeans, so it's good over things. It's from Catherine Andre. I'm not sure, she may have been at Missoni's before, a designer, it's from France. She has knitwear with quite a bit of pattern. Usually it's too much for my taste but I really liked this one. And I still do. And when I wear it well, I wore it to a Christmas Fair at the school, it gets noticed and people do say that it's a nice jumper.



Figure A.53

Old clothes

When I ask about her older clothes, going perhaps back to the time before they moved to the UK, Hanka tells me she does not have any of those anymore. However, later on in our conversation she comes across a denim skirt [Figure A.54] which I remember her wearing when we were students in Prague (over fifteen years ago now).

This skirt is super! Well, that one was from H&M when I still lived in Vienna. So, it's still, you see, that one is from Vienna! And it's, when I lost a bit of weight, it's a 38, it was a bit too big for me and it didn't fit properly, so when I was in Vienna, I thought about getting rid of it. And then, I put weight on again, and now it fits me beautifully [smile]. You know, I put it on, and it really makes my figure look good.



Figure A.54

Still, this skirt is more of an exception as Hanka does not seem to be too sentimental about clothes. She feels quite strongly that they only have a function when they are worn. She enjoys buying new clothes, often as a way *to somehow change oneself*, but admits that while she truly likes many of her clothes and tends to wear them often when they are new, she also likes a change after a while. *In a couple of years, you know, one wears them so much that one wants to move on, to liven things up, for not being in such a boring routine*, she says. When I ask if she has any clothes that she would find

difficult to part with, possibly because of a memory attached to them, Hanka finds it difficult at first to recall anything like that, but later says she used to especially remember underwear. She explains:

I know exactly when I used to wear it but then it no longer fit, it's done its job, I had it for years afterwards and never wore it again [a sound of a closing zip as she packs things back into her box of precious clothes]. You know, one looks at it, yes, there is the memory. But then the time came I gave it away and have no regrets. Because the memory stays in my head and I don't want to have too many things, I have quite enough as it is.

Clothes seem to be crucially important for Hanka because of the way they make her feel when she wears them, yet when they are no longer wearable for whatever reason, especially when she has *grown out of them* in any sense, she remembers the feeling they used to give her when she first got them and is ready to look for something that will give her similar memories in the future.

A.4 NICOLA: I can go straight from the board rooms onto a ladder in this dress

ABOUT NICOLA

Nicola is an art historian and curator in her early thirties. She lives with her husband and their young son in a flat in Leeds. Both she and her husband are Scottish by origin and they moved to England because of their jobs several years ago.

PREPARING FOR THE INTERVIEW

Our interview took place on a Sunday afternoon, only a week after their move to a new flat. Nicola kindly agreed to meet me despite this transition and when I arrived, she greeted me at the door with a warm smile. Their flat already looked lived in and everything seemed in its place. On my complimentary comment, Nicola responded that they simply had to do everything very quickly because of her very demanding work schedule. She offered me a drink, but as it seemed clear to me that it was not easy for her to fit in our appointment, also arranging for her husband to take their little boy out to avoid distractions, I politely refused and indicated that I am happy to start as soon as she feels ready. We therefore had only a very quick introductory chat standing in the kitchen, after which Nicola invited me to see her wardrobe in the bedroom.

As Nicola is a researcher herself, and had finished her PhD only a few years ago, she was familiar with the ethics procedures and did not have any additional questions. She also looked quite comfortable with recording and photography; however, she still welcomed my reassurance that the full transcript and all the photographs will be given to her for approval before publication.

NICOLA'S WARDROBE

Just like Mary, who I interviewed shortly before her, Nicola had also thought about how she would present her clothes to me ahead of our interview. *I kind of tried to put things which I would normally hang in my wardrobe together in a kind of coherent narrative*, she said, opening the doors of a large built-in wardrobe [Figure A.55].



Figure A.55

In the last few years, she has led quite a nomadic life that included several moves in the space of seven years. This lifestyle has also significantly shaped her wardrobe *because of all that moving around you have to be quite capsular*. While she used to have many more clothes when she was younger, the disadvantage was that she was not able to see all that she had when she was getting dressed, *things would get like kind of slightly lost*. Her preferences however changed since. Now, Nicola is much more interested in being able to see everything that she has and *kind of know where things are*, because her everyday dressing is then much easier. These concerns are reflected in her carefully edited wardrobe, in which she makes a clear division between the clothes she wears for special occasions and work events and those items that get worn on an everyday basis.

A large built-in wardrobe in the bedroom contains mainly occasion wear, some favourite older pieces and also Nicola's collection of shoes, which by her own admission would easily get out of control with a little less self-restraint. *I could be a real shoe collector if I let myself get too carried away*, she confesses. Her everyday clothes are then stored in a bathroom cupboard because Nicola finds this to be the most efficient option, *that's where I get dressed, so, it makes sense*.

Favourite clothes

Most of Nicola's current wardrobe goes only a few years back, which she explains by the fact that rather than having a sort of *walk-in back catalogue of everything you've ever worn* she now decided to try and just keep things that *I REALLY love - that really matter to me*. One such thing is a vintage coat that she bought at a flea market in Edinburgh when she was a student [Figure A.56]. She has had it relined several times since and wore it to work all last winter.

It's probably my favourite coat because it's so unusual and a lot of people comment on it when I wear it. People are - wow! - you know that looks so retro! And I think it IS - it's probably like seventies, sixties or seventies. But I just really love it. It's just something I really enjoy wearing and I think it kind of goes with everything as well? So, it's probably the oldest thing, you know the one thing that I really kept.



Figure A.56

Another item that Nicola has had for many years is a dress that she remembers wearing the night she met her husband thirteen years ago [Figure A.57]. She refers to it as a *long-term friend* and she also remembers wearing it to her sister's eighteenth birthday. *She's going to be thirty next weekend*, she says smiling.

This I've had for a long time. I kept this one because it really means a lot to me. But also, it's one of these dresses which again, you can kind of dress up or down? It's like you can kind of wear it with just like trousers and top underneath and have it almost like a jacket sort of style. Or it's, because it's a wrap dress, you can wear something underneath like a slip and make it a bit more evening. (...) I just thought that was kind of an interpretation of a dress that I saw on the catwalk that I really would have liked to have owned. And it was just from La Redoute, you know, a long time ago. But I just had so many good times in this dress



Figure A.57

Nicola also kept her second wedding dress which she bought because she needed something that she could change into for ceilidh dancing in the evening [Figure A.58]. Although she loved the dress she wore for the wedding ceremony [Figure A.59], it was entirely unsuitable for ceilidh which is *almost like a sport*, so she needed a dress that allowed free movement.

I've worn it SO many times. I wanted something that I'd wear again, and my sister got her bridesmaid dress, I said to her: I'm having one bridesmaid, so you can wear WHATEVER you want and I want you to get something that you'll wear again. So, she got an Alexander McQueen dress that she's worn several times since then and I got this. It's a Pied de Terre dress from the same place. An I just wore this to Times Higher Education Awards, I've worn this to other people's weddings, it's just like one of those dresses which I really adore. I know it's not retro, it's not really retro, but it kind of is antiqued in that way, I thought it was quite twenties. So, I thought it was quite a useful shape for me.

People loved the fact that I ceilidhed with the second dress in the evening. It was kind of a surprise, I went away for a bit with Nick and I changed, and it was just so much more comfortable, oh my goodness! I LOVE that dress [the first wedding dress], that dress WAS comfortable, but it was corseted. So, you know, when I took it off, I was just so grateful for like Chanel at that point [laughs].



Figure A.58



Figure A.59

Practical concerns

Comfort and practicality are key in Nicola's everyday wear. Juggling the demands of her current job with motherhood is now significantly reflected in her clothing choices. *It's gotta be quick, it's gotta be practical, it's gotta be kind of relatively easy to keep and maintain*, she sums up. She also needs *things which are not gonna tear and things which aren't gonna get kind of too messed up* because she often ends up carrying her little boy, especially in the morning.

In addition to this, Nicola's current role involves many diverse tasks. On the one hand, there is public speaking and boardroom meetings and on the other, exhibition installation and hanging. Therefore, her professional wardrobe has to *kind of balance between the very very formal and the very kind of practical, informal*. One of the latest items was therefore bought with exactly this in mind [Figure A.60].

This is actually a really recent thing I bought but that can probably be a long-term friend [laughs]. It's funny because this is from Jigsaw and I tried on two dresses, there's another one like this and it was VERY similar to some of the jerseys I saw in Disobedient Bodies - did you see that exhibition? When I was in that room, I wanted one of those winter dresses so BADLY. And I finally saw one in Jigsaw and I tried it on and it was JUST a little bit, because I'm quite a small person, it was just a little bit overwhelming? So, this one actually kind of matched my body proportions a lot better.

And it actually just looks so much more kind of, I don't know, grown up and kind of - makes me feel the part when I'm in certain kind of formal spaces. And it's also really good for winter because it's got long sleeves and it's cosy. I LOVE stripes! I'm completely obsessed with ANYTHING in a minimalist stripy kind of style. And it's actually quite flattering!



Figure A.60

Exceptions to the rule

Quite an unusual occurrence in Nicola's wardrobe in terms of colour, material, and style, is a dress that she bought especially for a dress code event she was invited to a month ago [Figure A.61].

This is interesting! This is like - I don't wear green or colour at all very often. But I had to go to a book launch and it was on dress code and it was for the suffragettes' history, they actually included my great great aunt who was a suffragette within the book. So, I wanted to go there and represent my great aunt and I thought - right - I need to wear something really like, you know, one of these colours and I need to really go for it. So, I got this dress, and again, everyone was saying - oh, that's such a nice dress! That's such a nice colour on you! So, I don't know, I may wear more green now.

So, it's called a skater dress? I'm not sure, it's bought on-line, but I LOVE the colour because I DON'T usually wear colour, so it was quite unusual for me and I quite like lace, you know. Most of my clothes are very minimalist, so when I dress up it's quite nice to wear something a bit more like - I don't know - antique or kind of playful Victorian, that sort of thing.



Figure A.61

Understanding one's style

Nicola also finds that now she is in her thirties she *just got used to the idea that there's things that suit me and there's things that don't* [laughs], and so she tries to choose styles that she knows work well for her figure. This means she is less experimental with her clothing; her wardrobe is not *as interesting as it used to be* [smiles]. Yet, she has found her own style that fits with the diverse requirements of her professional life and motherhood.

This is ANOTHER dress that kind of does that sort of role [Figure A.62]. Again, it's kind of quite good for my proportions, I think. I need something which is more like waist orientated. There is all sorts of dresses that I would love to be able to wear but because I'm quite petite I need to wear a certain style. And this is something, again, people comment on this when I wear it. They go like - - that really suits you - that's a really chic one. So, anything with this kind of, I'm not really sure what the cut's called? But this kind of cut is good for me and the skirt is also good because it is the right cut length for me. So, it's a good, good work dress [smiles].

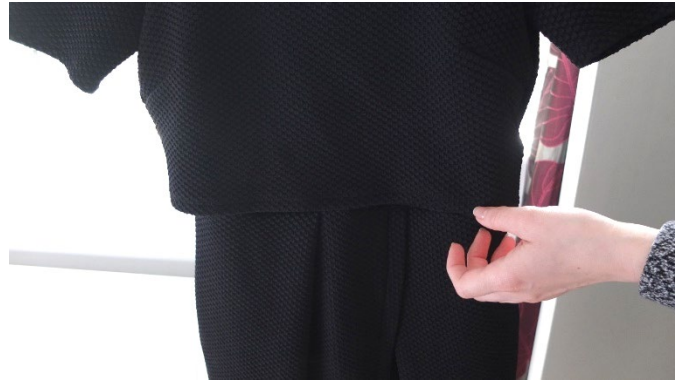


Figure A.62

Professional self-presentation

Nicola works in quite a senior position relative to her age and so she finds that appropriate professional self-presentation helps her to boost her self-confidence. *I guess it's just when I wear something that I'm comfortable in I feel like more in control of the room.* This applies especially when she hosts important events. A blouse that she wore recently was a perfect choice in this sense as it was *hosting but also kind of practical, but also stylish and kind of not detracting*, and she shows me a photo on her phone [Figure A.63].

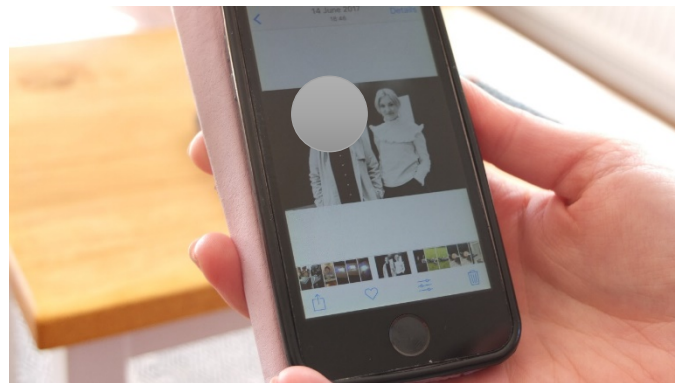


Figure A.63

Nicola strongly feels that in her job *it's quite important that I look the part* and so recently she bought another piece that she finds suitable for similar occasions [Figure A.64].

This is something I wore to a thing called The Artist Dining Room, where I had to give a dinner speech. So, I had to kind of dress up and again, I wanted to be sort of not too dressed up

[laughs]. So, it's kind of in between. And I'll probably wear this to a reception tomorrow night? To host at work. So, it's quite a good gallery dress, you know, that I can use and things.

It's a viscose or something, it's good because it matches everything as well. It's like it matches red shoes, it matches black shoes, you can be quite kind of playful with nail polish when you're wearing this dress. So, you can go for almost any of those colours and it will look really good. Yeah, I quite like the nude background as well. I've so far worn it as a dress, but I could wear it over trousers as a tunic. I like things which are kind of adaptable.



Figure A.64

Shades of grey

Black and grey are dominant in Nicola's wardrobe, because they are *easy to wear colours* that she can *just accessorize or not*. Moreover, she believes these colours are more suitable in her work context as she does a fair amount of public speaking and does not want colours to *distract too much* from what she is saying. Many of her everyday work clothes therefore tend to be variations on the same theme, generally in grey tones.

To see her everyday items, we move to the bathroom where they are stored. Here, Nicola shows me several pairs of grey and black trousers and skirts as well as tops with subtle patterns to match the same colour scheme [Figures A.65-A.70].



Figure A.65



Figure A.66



Figure A.67



Figure A.68



Figure A.69



Figure A.70

She especially likes her *pyjama shirt* that she remembers buying in her first job after she finished her doctoral research. It is easy to combine with many other things and the pattern also reminds her of her grandmother [Figure A.71].



Figure A.71

Another favourite is a gingham shirt which she likes both for its practicality and for the history of the material [Figures A.72-73].

This would normally be in my drawers, but this is a TOAST shirt that I just really like? It's really good for work, I feel really kind of comfortable in it? It's such a nice material, I just LOVE the material, I LOVE gingham! I don't really have that many things which are gingham, but I just really LOVE the kind of history of gingham. I saw an article in one of TOAST magazines and it was talking about that history and I just thought - gosh! - that's REALLY smart marketing? Because that REALLY makes me want to wear it, you know, and kind of almost like buy into that history? [laughs] So, I don't normally, I'm not normally influenced by kind of, too much of like campaign but I thought that was really smart because I had an intellectual context to it? Which I liked?

And it was in TOAST magazine and then they brought this and a dress version of this? And the dress version was a bit too long for me but the shirt I just really liked. The collar goes underneath things really nicely? So, it's good for winter. But I just [whispering], I just love the material [whispering].



Figure A.72



Figure A.73

Chanel

An important work favourite is a cardigan which Nicola finds very comfortable and useful for conferences because it is light and travels well [Figure A.74]. She loves *anything Chanel inspired*, loose, but still elegant styles, and pearl buttons. *I guess when you find something you like you just kind of buy it again*, she says and so if she comes across a similar top she will buy it. She finds this style very easy to wear and she knows she will get a lot use out of it.



Figure A.74

If money were no object, Nicola would also love to have a real Chanel suit. Admitting this is *a bit of fantasy* right now, she feels that it would *DEFINITELY* get a lot of wear which would make good economic sense. She recalls that someone once told her that if she buys something very expensive, she should divide the price by the number of times she wears that item. Since then, Nicola says, this rule has influenced most of her new purchases. *I probably buy a lot more like in Whistles and L.K. Bennett now because I know those things will last and I can justify the cost because I know I'll wear them a lot*, so quality is now among her primary considerations.

Enjoying clothes

Despite all her current practical concerns, Nicola is adamant that *it's really important just to have clothes that you like wearing and that you really - like - enjoy having*. Now she has her little boy, there is no time to browse the shops. *Shopping's like a treat* and so she buys most her clothes on-line.

However, she still *LOVES fashion* and spends most of her evenings scrolling through Instagram for minimalist style inspirations [Figures A.75-79]. She is *obsessed with stripes* and has numerous outfits with variations on the same, stripy theme.

I remember reading something about the word 'iki' which translates as 'chic' in Japanese, it was all basically based on sailor wear? And I just became obsessed with that idea - like kind of stripes and cool colours, I wear lots of things like this.



Figure A.75



Figure A.76



Figure A.77



Figure A.78



Figure A.79

Nicola only wears jeans occasionally, at weekends, but she loves her pair of *mum jeans* in her favourite peg style [Figure A.80]. She finds the colour contrast of the panel that goes down the side especially attractive. She also points out, however, that her father, who is a very stylish man and has otherwise been a great influence, would not approve of this design.

He's of the opinion that no one should buy stone-washed jeans ever [laughs]...because they should be bought in indigo and they should never have holes in them. He DOES wear jeans but he's NEVER the one for stonewashing.



Figure A.80

A special treat from her travels, a Chinese jacket bought last year in Amsterdam, stands out in Nicola's collection of predominantly black, grey, and stripy outfits [Figure A.81]. It is still wrapped in the original tissue paper. However, Nicola seems to welcome the opportunity to unwrap the parcel and proudly shows the jacket to me.

There is a LITTLE bit of colour [smiles]. It's got kind of shoulder pads, again, it's quite good for my body shape. I don't know when I wear it but I really want, I just wanted one for ages so I finally found one that suited me so I just got it. I just love this kind of effect [buttons].



Figure A.81

Similar to the green lacy dress she bought for the book launch, the style, the colour and also the material of the jacket break away from the dominance of practical considerations that currently rule her wardrobe. Although this may change again in the future, right now her lifestyle requires more versatile pieces, just like one of her most recent work outfits [see Figure 6]. *I can go straight from the boardrooms on to a ladder no problem in this dress [smiles]*, which truly sums up Nicola's current wardrobe expectations.

A.5 GOLRAZ: It has been very loyal to me - that's why I am loyal to it

ABOUT GOLRAZ

At the time of our interview, Golraz was a research student soon to turn thirty. She lived in a student house in Huddersfield, West Yorkshire, sharing with several other postgraduate students. Iranian by origin, Golraz came to the UK in 2015 to do her PhD in architecture. Previously, she worked in an architecture studio in Tehran and she also lived in Italy and Germany.

PREPARING FOR THE INTERVIEW

Our conversation took place early in the morning on a weekday when Golraz planned to work from home. She greeted me at the door and took me straight into her room on the ground floor of a large Victorian terrace. Despite the early hour, Golraz looked fresh and prepared. She was dressed comfortably in her home leggings and a T-shirt and she seemed to be looking forward to the interview.

I had seen Golraz recently and so there was no need for a longer introduction on the day. I made sure she felt comfortable with the recording of our conversation and then I placed the dictaphone discretely on the coffee table next to her computer which seemed a suitable spot that could cover the whole room without drawing unnecessary attention to the device. Similarly, I also tried to make the transition to taking photographs as casual as possible while again re-assuring Golraz that any photos she does not like for any reason will not be used. Even though I used a large DSLR camera for this session [see Chapter 5.1 (p. 125) for more detail], Golraz seemed very relaxed about photography. She also made clear that she does not mind if I take images that would include her face and the whole body (in addition to the photos of details and hands that I mainly wanted to focus on).

GOLRAZ'S WARDROBE

As I explained in Chapter 5.1 (p. 125), to help my interviewees to relax into the interview, I first asked them to tell me about their latest piece of clothing. In the answer to this initial question, Golraz did not seem to need much encouragement and without any delay or hesitation, she showed me a skirt that she had bought quite recently in the sale at the House of Fraser [Figure A.82].

Warmth

At first, she says, she found it *reaaaaly unique*, however, she had second thoughts later. Suddenly the skirt *actually felt* too long and perhaps a bit *old fashioned* for that reason, yet Golraz still managed to wear it. She shows me how she normally pulls it much higher up, over her waist, because *then it feels different ... then you think it's a dress*. What she especially likes is the pattern and also *the feeling when I touch it*. While stroking the fabric, she encourages me to try for myself. 'Is it quite soft?', I ask, expecting her to expand on the feel of the fabric. *Yeah, and it feels kind of warm*, she tells me. From now on, the conversation flows quite seamlessly without the need for more prompting.



Figure A.82

Warmth, it turns out, is one of Golraz's primary considerations when she buys new clothes, especially since the time she has moved to Yorkshire. *Cold weather really bothers me, it hurts me!*, she explains laughing, *so, when I see something, I'm like, woowow! Because I feel like it's warm. It can just make me reaaaally warm.*

Moving clothes



Figure A.83

When Golraz moved to the UK, she brought her often used clothes in a large suitcase that she now stores at the top of her wardrobe [Figure A.83]. She also brought more of her clothes with her later visits back home and her mother also sent some of her favourite everyday items in the post. A coat, that was a gift from her aunt, also arrived in the post from Iran [Figure A.84]. *I reaaally love it*, Golraz says as she pulls it out of the wardrobe. At the same time, she points out that this rarely happens to her with gifted clothes.

Usually when people buy me clothes I don't particularly like it. Usually because of the size or because of the colour or because of the texture. If I went to buy this, I wouldn't buy it maybe because it has some golden buttons. But the combination...The thing came to me and I like it.



Figure A.84

Golraz's current wardrobe includes several garments that she strongly associates with her *first moments of independence* as a student in Milan, where she studied for her MA. These clothes, she tells me, have a special significance for her as she associates them with many fond memories of her student days.

I loved myself more than now...at that time, and I was WAY more happier...I AM still a happy person but then...I was REALLY enjoying every second of my life.

Apart from her Italian clothes, Golraz also has some items that she bought two-three years back while she was working in Tehran, after finishing her MA. She also regularly wears a couple of much older garments that her parents bought for her when she was at high school. Then there are also some relatively recent items that she bought since she moved to the UK.

Quality and affordability

For Golraz, buying new clothes is a long-term decision and so she mostly avoids buying *cheap clothes*. Instead, she aims to buy good quality because she wants her clothes to last for a long time. She also aims not to have too many clothes as this, she reiterates several times during our conversation, does not make her happy. Her ideal wardrobe would include only a few items that she could wear regularly. Despite this, right now she has much more than she would ideally wish to own as because of her fluctuating weight she can no longer comfortably fit into some of her older items.

As one such example, Golraz shows me a duvet coat that she bought in Italy [Figure A.85]. Like with many of the other items she later shows me, she remembers exactly when she bought it. With this coat, she especially remembers that she was not *in a very good economical situation to afford something that expensive*. Yet, she bought it anyhow because she liked it very much and believed that its good quality will make the coat a worthwhile long-term investment. She never regretted:

This is - like this is the thing that I like - still this is my choice after so many years. Maybe it's been 6-7 years that I have it? Still I haven't seen something that I wished - oh, I wish I didn't have this, and I have that - because this was what I wanted.



Figure A.85

[So, are you still satisfied with it?]

Yeah, I'm very satisfied with it. It's very warm, the only problem I have is that when I bought it, it was actually a little bit loose for me. Now [laughing], it's kind of very tight - that's the only problem. The thing is that one of the main reasons that I don't want to get fat is that I want to be able to wear it!

Similar to the time when she first bought the coat, Golraz's current concerns about not being able to fit into it anymore, come down also to economic considerations. *First of all, I can't afford to buy new clothes*, she says laughing. However, as she continues, it becomes clear that Golraz's perception of affordability is also closely linked to her strong views regarding value and style. This means that she does not want to spend money on items which she knows will not last in her wardrobe, either due to inferior quality or because they do not match her expectations in terms of style and design.

Yeah, I can go and buy something - for like any money that you have you can afford to buy clothes. But I won't be happy wearing them. Even if I buy - if I buy like socks - I care about them. They may look similar to other socks but for me there are some very important details that I paid attention to. Like if it has two colours, then, what are the two colours and like what proportion are they? This is very important [laughs].

On the one hand, Golraz here points to the current affordability of clothing but on the other, she also explains that despite her love of a bargain and clothes shopping in sales, price is not the primary factor in her shopping decisions.

Details and care

Quality, Golraz repeatedly says, is crucial in her shopping decisions. When I ask how she may judge it, she explains: *at first, I look at details - if it just happened random or it's really planned - how they end things*. The significance of such subtle details for Golraz's relationship to her clothes is confirmed in her description of one of her day dresses [Figure A.86]:

I also like that it kind of has the zip here [opens the zip], which is, see how nice it is? That's what I like because when I wear it I kind of think that I am taking care of myself - because somebody actually took care of this. This has been loved, you know [smiles], that's - that's what I like.



Figure A.86

Although she clearly likes this dress, it also turns out that she does not get to wear it as often as she would like. Firstly, just like many of her other clothes, the dress is too tight for her at the moment. Secondly, it needs to be washed by hand or dry-cleaned, which is another important factor that affects the frequency with which she wears some of the clothes in her wardrobe.

Oh yeah, that's another problem I have. Some of the clothes that I have I love them so much but I have washing problems with them so I can't wear them really. I can't put them in the

washing machine. Nowadays when I buy something I kind of check if I can just put it in the dryer, in the washing machine.

Any items that require ironing are also a challenge for Golraz in her shared accommodation with a limited storage, *because for me anything that I take out takes lots of time to just again put it back in the same place, so that's a problem.* Her main storage for clothing is a double door hanging wardrobe, with two full-width drawers at the bottom. In addition to this, she has a small IKEA hanging shelf where she stores her accessories and shoes, and two hooks on her room door for hanging light jackets. Overall, she finds that this limited storage considerably affects the ways in which she can use her clothes, *because I just don't see it because it's somewhere there and I don't remember.* This also influences Golraz's new purchases as she is well aware that every new item only aggravates this situation: *now, whenever I buy something - I'm like just - where are you going to put it then?*

Shopping decisions

Golraz admits that she enjoys people's compliments and that she cares about their comments on her outfits. Yet, when she shops for clothes, she prefers to be on her own. *When I'm buying clothes, I don't need people's opinion,* because she feels that other people's views can distract her from her own preferences. The most important thing for Golraz is to be *in love* with what she is buying. To demonstrate on an example, she finds one of her favourite dresses in her hanging wardrobe. The way she feels about it is instantly obvious from her expression as she proudly shows the dress to me [Figures A.87-88].

This is so beautiful! Oh, I love it, I love it! I could wear it and I was so pretty [laugh]! The back is - that's really lovely [showing how the back is different from the front]. It's lovely - it's just lovely!

[Did you bring it from Iran?]

Yeah, I bought it in Italy. I took it home, I brought it here, I was not the same size. It wasn't the right size for me, and it is not still. You know I'm keeping it because I, kind of, I don't know, I can just give it to my daughter maybe [laugh]. I love it so much!



Figure A.87



Figure A.88

Interestingly, one of the older pieces that she is still able to wear despite her weight fluctuations is a cardigan that her parents bought for her about fifteen years ago [Figure A.89]. Golraz is very impressed by its quality, especially the way it withstands washing, as despite having been washed countless times over the years, the cardigan still retains its original colour. She pulls it out of the wardrobe and as she starts showing it to me in more detail Golraz suddenly decides: *it's really good*

and I want to wear it now. She puts it on, laughing, and again points out to me how it still looks like new and fits perfectly after all these years.



Figure A.89

Looking truly comfortable, Golraz then keeps the cardigan on for the rest of our conversation [Figure A.90]. *It's easy, you know, right size, right everything - and it never dies. Never dies! I can imagine wearing it when I'm one hundred years old,* she tells me with a smile on her face.

However, she is also aware that the reason the cardigan still fits her comes down to her parents' good advice. She fondly recalls the shopping trips with her parents, who she says never tried to influence her in terms of style or price, but they always encouraged her to buy things with a looser fit. If it were not for them, she admits, she would again *end up buying something really tight which can't go through my neck anymore* [laughs].



Figure A.90

The coat

Another piece that Golraz appreciates for its quality, versatility and general usefulness is a coat that she bought several years ago in a sale of a small Iranian label [Figures A.91-93].

So, this is another thing that I really love. See, the only problem it has that it's not designed particularly for England. It doesn't have a zip, so when it's so windy [laughs]...It has a belt, it works properly in Tehran where I bought it. It doesn't work as good here. But it helps me a lot whenever I'm wearing a dress or something.



Figure A.91

At that time, I needed it for the same purpose as I'm using it now - something black and, like, useful. I needed something waterproof and at the same time not very cold inside and I wanted it to be black. And you know it's very easy to wear. When it's not windy and it's not heavily raining, I just wear it and I don't use the belt even. It feels really good.



Figure A.92



Figure A.93

Golraz also comments that when she wears this coat, she instantly notices that people treat her differently, as *a fancy girl* and shop assistants promptly volunteer with their *can I help you?* This is in sharp contrast to her experience of wearing her other weather-proof item, a *very ordinary* jacket that is one of her most treasured pieces of clothing [Figure A.94-95].

A choice of outfit, Golraz explains, depends on her mood: *because there are some mornings that I say - yeah, actually I don't want to wear any make-up, I don't want to look any better than I am at the moment. And then that's what I wear.* Unlike the black coat that seems to attract a lot of attention, this jacket seems to make her virtually invisible. *Nobody even sees me*, she says laughing.

This simple black jacket with a hood is one of the items that Golraz remembers buying with her parents when she was still at high school. Originally, it felt a little too big because her father once again insisted that she goes for a looser fit so that she can put several layers underneath. With

the benefit of a hindsight, Golraz appreciates that this was the right decision as it is thanks to this that she is still able to wear the jacket now. If it were not for her parent's advice it would no longer fit her. The fact that the jacket have gone through a lot of washing without any considerable signs of wear is for Golraz a proof of *very good quality* and she explains that she now thinks of the jacket as a friend:

I wear it very often because I like it! Like we are now, I think, after so many years, friends. You know you, you don't look for friends - you don't look if they're beautiful or they're... You know, you just want them to be trustworthy. That's the same feeling I have with it [smiles]. I think it has been very loyal to me - that's why I am being loyal to it [still smiling].



Figure A.94



Figure A.95

Climate

This jacket is also one of the few older pieces that are suitable for Yorkshire weather. The difference in climate, is another important reason why Golraz is now not able to wear some of her older clothes bought in Iran or Italy. A skirt bought in Italy, which she still finds *really lovely* [Figure A.96], is one such example. In this case, Golraz did not wait for the sales to buy it as she *didn't want to risk it*. It was perfect for the weather and the climate in Italy and so she wore it very often at the time. She would wear it higher up, over her waist, like she now wears the new skirt she showed me at the beginning of our conversation [Figure A. 82]. *You know, it was really nice with a top and this and it felt really good, and I was thinner at the time, so I was happier*, Golraz smiles and sighs at the same time.



Figure A.96

A dress for a friend's wedding

Another piece she decides to show me as she looks through her wardrobe is a dress that she remembers wearing to a close friend's wedding [Figure A.97]. Weddings in Iran, Golraz explains, require a strict dress code, *you have this responsibility to wear something REALLY fancy*. Although she suspects many people would think this dress does not look special in any way, or perhaps not even appropriate for a wedding, when she matched with a black belt [Figure A.98] Golraz received many compliments on her outfit and so has no regrets about the choice. *When I wear it, you will admit that it really looks nice*, she tells me laughing.

It looks good on me and I feel good when I'm wearing it. I don't feel, you know, when sometimes you wear something, and you feel like it's not me particularly - it's like a posh girl,

I don't know. Sometimes I don't feel like it's me. But this is something that when I wear it, like, in weddings even, which is very formal, I feel that I'm myself. So, I feel good and I look nice in it, yeah.



Figure A.97

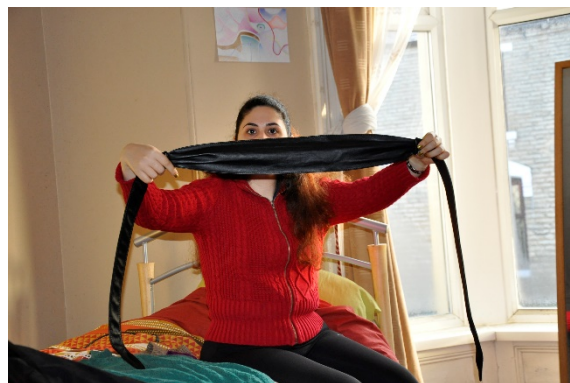


Figure A.98

Trousers

As we speak for quite a long time, having already covered a considerable part of Golraz's current wardrobe, it suddenly strikes me that there was no mention of trousers yet. When I prompt her with a question, Golraz recalls only two pairs of trousers in her life that she *LOVED*, and she no longer has either of these. One pair was passed onto a family member in Iran, and the other, which she used to wear with her duvet coat, soon wore out around the crotch seam.

Golraz later explains that finds shopping for trousers rather challenging and tiring too, because unlike for example trying on a jumper, trying on trousers in a shop involves a lot of undressing. This means that she tends to go for the same tight style over and over again. Although it does not particularly work for her, by her own admission, Golraz does not really invest much effort in looking for better solutions. Shopping for trousers, she says, is *weird* because most of the time one size is too small and the next one up is too big. *And it makes you feel bad, you know, it makes you feel like there's something wrong with you*, she comments with a resigned laugh. Eventually, as she continues browsing through her wardrobe, she finds a pair that she wants to show me. Before she says anything, she stretches the waist [Figure A.99]:

That's very good because it's [showing how it stretches] and I usually go for that kind of trousers nowadays. I don't have to deal with this part [showing waist] because this part has like an elastic so does the job.



Figure A.99

This last remark feels symbolic of Golraz's relationship to most of her wardrobe. She loves clothes that are functional and versatile, that make her feel good about herself, and she tries to make them work for her for as long as her fluctuating weight allows.

A.6 KATHRYN: That reminds me of a nice evening out with girls

ABOUT KATHRYN

Kathryn is an osteopath in her early fifties. She lives with her teenage son in a house in a small town in Buckinghamshire. She is English and grew up in London, but she travelled extensively with her family and later also with her ex-husband.

PREPARING FOR THE INTERVIEW

Kathryn and I met on a weekday morning when she was not working because later that day she was leaving for a long weekend with her girlfriends at her holiday chalet in Devon. I have known her for a few years through her late father who was a good friend of mine. After he passed away, Kathryn and I have kept in touch. When I arrived, she offered me a cup of coffee, proudly showing me her new kitchen that she had recently connected with her living to create an open plan living space. Like Julie, Louise and Emma before her, Kathryn too mentioned that she might not have enough *interesting* clothes to show me. Therefore, while we were drinking coffee, I explained again that I am interested in her daily wardrobe rather than anything extraordinary. I also reassured her that she can withdraw at any point and that any parts of the transcript or images she does not feel entirely comfortable with, will be removed. After this, Kathryn seemed keen to start and so we moved upstairs, into her bedroom.

KATHRYN'S WARDROBE

The main storage for Kathryn's clothes consists of a large built-in double wardrobe and a chest of drawers, both in her bedroom. She stores her chunkier knitwear and accessories under her bed and she also regularly puts her seasonal clothing away in the attic. Taking things out before the new season is always exciting as Kathryn often finds something she forgot about in the meantime: *I LOVE getting the summer stuff out of the attic because then I'm kind of like - oh! I've forgotten I had that! - that's REALLY REALLY nice.*

She tries to keep only the clothes that she actually wears, admitting that she tends to be *quite ruthless* when it comes to disposing of clothes. Kathryn feels that most people, her including, tend

to *gather far too much stuff and then it can tie you down*. For this reason, whenever she buys a new piece of clothing, she tries to make a point of revising her wardrobe at the same time: *I try and just sort through if there's something here that could do with being chucked away*. The things she no longer wants are then taken to charity.

Second-hand clothes

This wardrobe rotation is also one of the reasons why Kathryn no longer has many second-hand clothes. She says she used to have more second-hand items in the past, but now she does not shop second-hand very often. She finds some second-hand shops *quite smelly* and this does not encourage her to actively look for second-hand clothing. However, as long as they are not worn out, she is quite happy to wear second-hand items. In fact, several pieces that she bought at charity events are among her current favourites. It is therefore the experience of shopping rather than the clothes as such that puts her off more second-hand purchases.

Ah! Here's another one that I love! [Figure A.100]. This, actually, 'cause my job, I can't usually wear skirts, you know. Because it's quite hands on. But, actually, this - because it's an A line - I can sometimes. I just put some stockings underneath and things. And this I love because I got it from a swish party. You know, a friend was fund-raising for cancer or something - Cancer Research. And it's White Stuff, which I love. Yes, and another friend was like, you know, she brought this in and it was great! As it didn't cost me anything other than giving some money to charity. And that I love because I love anything that's kind of applique and things like that. And it's got the zip up the side, which is brilliant. So, if I've had too much to eat, I can still get into it [laughs] and it's lined, so you're all right. So, yeah, I love that. That's really nice. So, that was fun. That's a nice one that reminds me of a nice evening out with girls.



Figure A.100

Independent boutiques

What Kathryn truly enjoys is shopping in independent boutiques and directly from makers at markets, craft fairs and special events. *I always love it when it's something that somebody has made themselves*, she feels that these clothes offer an extra human touch. She also likes the little details that often distinguish these pieces from high street fashion. She finds applique, hand-stitching and nice buttons particularly attractive. *I LOVE it when people have lovely buttons*, she says, and so she also has her own button jar which she uses in her new hobby of up-cycling. *I suppose everyone likes to have things that are a little bit different*, just like the *cats print* on a top that she bought in a small boutique near her holiday home [Figure A.101]. She decides to find it in her ironing pile downstairs to show me:

So, it hasn't been ironed yet [laugh]. But I thought it's quite fun, so I thought I'll show it to you. ... Well, it is lovely! And that is from a lovely shop in Devon called Poppy and Blue and they sell quite a lot of one size things - because they're quite baggy. But this has got like the bat wings sort of thing, so, actually it's really flattering even though it doesn't come all the way down. Yeah, actually it's quite wide and so you could have something that isn't long

sleeved and looks really good still. And I love the cats. Can't resist the cats. And Poppy and Blue do a lot of lovely lovely things. And! I think this was like ten or fifteen pounds - it's quite a good value as well.



Figure A.101

Another similar example is a coat with quirky details that she finds attractive and unusual [Figures A.102-104].

Actually, I love this coat! I just wear this all the time. So, this I love the fact that it comes with a scarf. You think you're getting value for money [laugh]. But they've also stitched this in which means the scarf stays put, which is also really good. So, I quite like that - it's almost like being a kid and your mum is making sure you don't lose something. And then you've got different buttons. So, I love that and I like the lining. The lining's really good. You can put buttons on easily [laughs]. It isn't finished very well, which you will have noticed because you're a seamstress. But it's things like [examining the coat in detail] - oh, that's not too bad, that side, but the other side is a bit off. But I still like it because I think, well, it's still a very good value. It didn't cost me a huge amount of money, but I wear it all the time and it's a nice shape on me?

[So, was it again an independent shop where you bought it?]

Yes, it was a little boutique. So, it's Joe Browns? But you can also get it by catalogue and so they're quite reasonable priced things. But they're a little bit quirky and they're a bit, sort of, you know, slightly hippie. But I quite like it because I like the fact that you've got the sort of brocade things, the velvet and then it's done it on the pocket [showing] and, you know, and I do like the shape of it. I've had it for ages.



Figure A.102



Figure A.103



Figure A.104

Versatile clothes

Kathryn appreciates clothes that can be worn in different ways and so have *lots of use*. She shows me another item from an independent boutique which she likes *because you can wear it as a boob dress or you can use it as a long skirt, so it can be a maxi skirt* [Figure A.105]. For similar reasons, she also likes boleros. Her gauzy one, for example, is a *really great staple* because it *kind of goes with everything which is great, so that's a favourite* [Figure A.106].



Figure A.105



Figure A.106

Another truly universal item is her stripy leotard which she can wear for cycling, yoga, or Pilates, but also dressed up and combined with a skirt [Figure A.107]. She finds it *REALLY handy*, which is why it is the one of the oldest pieces she has kept.

This I've had, I'm quite proud of that, that I've had for about fifteen years and it still fits me. A leotard is great ... I mean - if you go cycling the wind doesn't get in there, if you do yoga, or Pilates, or just wear it under a skirt. You can have like a maxi skirt and then you just have this. And then sleeves keep you nice and snug. And this one goes right up to the neck.



Figure A.107

Good times with friends

Apart from their practical aspects, many of Kathryn's favourite clothes are also linked with memories of good times spent with friends. A brocade coat that she bought at a charity event in London stands out among these [Figure A.108].

This is a good one to talk about. It's one of those things that you can wear with a pair of jeans or you can, kind of, you know, dress up or dress down. (...) I got it, actually, it's a lady who has, in King's Cross, a second-hand, sort of vintage clothing shop? And she, all the profits go to this school in Afghanistan, for girls. Her background is - her mother and father were - he was an eye surgeon and she was a nurse and he was working out there, so she remembers being out there as a child and she wanted to help the girls because they weren't being educated. So, what she did was she did a big clothes sale at a church. So, it was this way and a friend of mine said: oh, this is taking place. And she had lots of clothes which were like - that she said they're designer ones, they're not well-known designers. I mean that's who it is [showing]. But she just had some nice unusual clothes. And it is nice, isn't it? So, that's a nice piece. Whenever I get that out I kind of think that it was, it was all, you know, so it was a fund-raising thing. And it was, I was with a really nice friend, with some of her girlfriends, and we were all sort of having a nice time.



Figure A.108

Travel souvenirs

Kathryn's practical concerns are also reflected in her love of buying clothes as souvenirs from her travels. Such clothes are then everyday reminders of her break and her travel memories. *It just makes me think about being on that beach and that part of the world*, she tells me about one of her all-time favourites, a summer dress from India. She cannot show me the dress because it is packed away in the attic for winter but talking about it still puts a smile on her face. Another of her travel souvenirs is a T-shirt that she bought in an outdoor shop in a small town in Canada while she was travelling with a friend [Figure A.109]. Kathryn wears it quite often, either to play tennis or just as leisure wear at home. She particularly loves the little badge with maple leaf at the bottom edge of the shirt. This little detail caught her eye and so she also bought a pair of tracksuit bottoms from the same company [Figure A.110].

This was very popular with an ex-boyfriend of mine [laughs]. He loved this! He loved the fact that it had the cheeky paw marks on the back [laughs]. And again, I just love the logo, the logo looks really good. (...) And it's just, it's like so soft on the inside. So, this I love. It's nice, happy colour and drawstring's great for slouching around [laughs]. It's like from, you know, when you were a kid. It's kind of, but then it has got the paw marks on the back.



Figure A.109



Figure A.110

Figure changes

Kathryn's weight tends to fluctuate and so she appreciates stretchy materials, elasticated waistbands, and drawstrings. She also likes side zips which she finds easier to do up when she had *too much to eat*. There are several items that she likes very much but cannot always fit into. A pair of jeans with a large floral pattern and her favourite woollen bolero are two examples of her *slim day* [laughs] clothes that she can only wear occasionally [Figures A.111-112].



Figure A.111



Figure A.112

This also means that Kathryn's more long-standing items are generally tops, as her trousers and skirts tend to be more affected by her figure changes – as she explains on the example of her old denim jacket [A.113].

I tell you this is a favourite as well, actually. That's good. Yeah, and goes on holiday. So yes, I like this one because I usually put my keys in there and I've got my summer dress on and then I kind of, you know. And this was a - was it a TK Maxx? Was it? That was a TK Maxx one. So, that's great. I have had it for ages, because I haven't changed on top that much? So, I'm all right. My trousers end up changing quite a lot.



Figure A.113

Practical considerations

Kathryn's osteopathic practice is *quite hands on* which means that the main consideration for her work wardrobe is practicality. She also has a dog which she often takes to her practice, taking it for countryside walks on the way there and back. Her daily wear therefore must fit around these needs. *I end up dressing a bit like a mum*, she laughs, and *all my clothes have got pet hairs on them*. One of the most recent additions to her wardrobe is a dress that seems perfect for this lifestyle. Although she has only had it for about a month, Kathryn tells me she is already very fond of it [Figure A.114].

This I love because it's kind of like - I love these buttons. And it's just, it's incredibly flattering piece. It's so simple, then you've got the yoke and all of this [showing fold at the back]. And you've even got pockets - though I know it's not good to put things in your pockets. But I love that because that just looks really nice with leggings and it's like a dress but it's like you almost feel as though you're not wearing a dress. And then you just - I go out and walk the dog in it and things. So, I love that, so that's new.



Figure A.114

Another practical item that Kathryn wears both to work and at weekends is a bright coloured top that is easy to combine with leggings or jeans [Figure A.115]. Despite numerous washes over the years, it has kept its original shape and is generally very easy to look after.

I've had this for years and it looks new still. Probably because it's one of those synthetic fabrics. And I've had it for about, probably, six years or something. And if I go travelling, I don't need to iron it. It's, you know, it's a lovely colour. And it just goes with leggings and things and it's good old Wallis. And that I wear a lot. And I've never really got bored of it. So, that's been a good buy. ... I do really like natural fabrics. But sometimes it's quite nice having a few things like that which is really really easy.



Figure A.115

Good value

Along with her love of independent boutiques, Kathryn also has some favourite high street brands and so she admits that she does shop in the *big stores* sometimes. However, whether it's a small boutique or a large high street chain, she still loves getting *good value*. Kathryn says she finds it difficult *to go and buy something really really extravagant* for herself, yet she is conscious that some of her more expensive pieces were no doubt a good investment. Her favourite skirt from TOAST is

a particularly good example [Figure A.116]. She has worn it for years and she can still imagine wearing it regularly in the future.

This is what I've had for years and years. 'Cause I like the fabric? And this is one from TOAST, which is really expensive. But cost per wear, it's good [laugh]. Yeah, yeah, I love it! I love the way that it's gathered like that - it's really nice. And then it sits over your hips. And this one, as I've got a bit bigger, I have to pop it on over the top. But, yeah, I'm still all right round the waist. So, I used to slip it on like this [showing]. I can't cause I got too big [smiles]. So, now I pop it over my head and then it is fine because it just sits on the waist. Because then the rest of it is nice and full. So, it's fine. I love it, it's great. I can actually amazingly still fit in that one.



Figure A.116

Another similar example is an expensive pair of trousers that she bought on the recommendation of a sales assistant without realizing how much it cost [Figure A.117]. Despite the price, Kathryn has no regrets at all because she has had *a lot of use* from these. Apart from their perfect fit and elasticated waist, another strong advantage of these trousers is that they do not necessarily need ironing. The design works well with a crumpled look and so even un-ironed, they look good once she puts them on. This certainly suits Kathryn as she admits that her ironing is *very cursory*.

It's a bit embarrassing because it's in a bit of a state but I wear it all the time. It looks like maternity trousers. But, actually, you can have it so that it goes up to here [shows the waist] or what you're meant to do really is to fold it over? So, you have a kind of fold over. And the fabric is quite stretchy? But I love the cut as well, I like the shape. (...) It was really expensive, and I only got it because one of the sales assistants went and looked on the rails and said: oh, just try this with that, you know. She knew exactly what she was doing. And it didn't have a price tag on it and then when I went to the till it was like - it was a hundred pounds. And I was like - I never spend that much on a pair of trousers [whispering]. And then I thought - well, if they look perfect on me? And they are divinely comfortable and very very flattering.



Figure A.117

Dressing up

As Kathryn's daily life does not give much opportunity for fancy outfits, she always looks forward to special occasions with friends that give her *an excuse* to dress up. When she goes out in the evening, she loves designs that cross over at the chest. She also likes styles that expose her back but points out with a smile that there must be a good balance between exposing and not exposing as she is getting older. Her most recent evening dress, bought for a friend's fiftieth birthday party, combined the two requirements perfectly [Figure A.118]. She tells me she loved wearing it as it looked good with heels and was also *a little bit flirty* without revealing too much as the open back was divided into two sections.



Figure A.118

This evening dress, like many other of Kathryn's all-time favourites, fits her well, makes her feel good, and it is now also a reminder of some good times with friends. *That was a really nice night out so there are happy memories there*, she says with a wide smile, obviously looking forward to another occasion to wear it in the future.

A.7 ANNABELLE: It's like that feeling of hugging her

ABOUT ANNABELLE

Annabelle is an education specialist in her early fifties, and she lives with her children and her boyfriend in a house on the edge of a commuters' town in Buckinghamshire. She is English but for many years she lived in Florida where she studied for her postgraduate degree and later got married. Seven years ago, she moved back to England with her son (9) and her daughter (19), who is now back in the US at university.

PREPARING FOR THE INTERVIEW

Annabelle daily commutes to work in London and we met on a Thursday afternoon when she kindly arranged to finish early to allow some daylight for the photos. Because of her busy family commitments, arranging a meeting at a weekend would be much more complicated and likely even impossible. When I arrived at her house Annabelle was not back yet, but she soon phoned me to apologize and arrived within ten minutes. On her way back from work she picked up her son and was held up by arrangements for his planned transfer to another school. When they arrived, her son proudly told me all about this and showed me his playroom full of Lego as well as some of his favourite gadgets. Annabelle then instructed him to play on his own and leave us to our conversation, which he did for most of the time except for two brief interruptions.

Annabelle offered me a cup of tea and contrary to my concern that she may find the interview too tiring after a busy day at work, she seemed refreshed by the change of topic. Although we had never met before, after only a few minutes of our introduction she found her iPad to show me, with a genuine excitement, a dress that she had just ordered on-line for her partner's birthday. She was also interested to hear more about my research, and she had clearly also looked at my research profile on-line. It turned out that Annabelle also interviewed people during her PhD research and so she was familiar with the ethical procedures and seemed instantly comfortable with both photography and recording. She said she was looking forward to taking part in my research as she would otherwise never get a chance to talk about her wardrobe. We soon moved upstairs where she keeps most of her clothes.

ANABELLE'S WARDROBE

Annabelle's wardrobe is divided into two main parts, stored in two different rooms. Her occasion wear, seasonal clothes and rarely worn items are stored on a rail in a spare room. The clothes that she wears on a regular basis, including most of her work clothes, weekend clothes and some of her less formal evening outfits, are stored in the bedroom. The storage in the bedroom includes a large built in wardrobe, shared between her and her boyfriend, and two chests of drawers for folded clothes. When we came upstairs, Annabelle first explained me the logic of dividing her clothes between the two rooms, also having to do with her concern that some the more formal clothes would get 'squashed' in the bedroom wardrobe. Then she chose to start with her evening wear and seasonal clothes in the spare room.

Florida clothes

Many of Annabelle's clothes are ten to twenty years old, going back to the time when she was still living in Florida. Although she still likes most of these, she does not get to wear all of them quite as often as she would like. The difference in climate is one reason, but Annabelle also feels that there is quite a difference between the US and the UK workplace dress-code and so some of her US work clothes would just feel out of place where she works now. For example, she has several business suits which used to be her *standard everyday wear* in her previous jobs, but she feels *people in England don't wear this stuff*.

A common feature of many of the dresses and skirts that she bought in the US are colours and prints that still remind her of Florida. She wears most of these several times a year to summer parties or during holidays. Out of these, she especially likes her *mermaid outfit* which she bought many years ago as she found the design striking [Figure A.119].

So, this is a very unusual skirt that I'm very attached to. For no sentimental reason, apart from the fact that I've never seen anything like it ever. I've never seen anything like it ever [laughs]. It's like, very under water. I feel like, when I wear it, I feel like I'm a mermaid. Again, it's gotta kind of, a very tight sort of fit? It has a slit here, in the side of it. And you can see, when I get out of the car - look [it's torn]. But it's a tight fit and when I'm wearing it it tails like a mermaid. And it's hand-printed. I love that! (...) It's quite difficult to know what to wear

with that. I struggle sometimes to find something to wear with it? And I wear like a variety of different tops. I was gonna see if I can find the top that I wear with it. Ah! Here we go! I wear that with it. So, that's my - that's my mermaid outfit [laughs].



Figure A.119

Another similar outfit, originally bought for a special occasion, gets worn much more often because she can also wear it to work [Figure A.120]. Annabelle has had it for a long time, but it still looks good and so she wears it quite frequently.

I've got a really old outfit that I was gonna say - like talk about sentimental value [laughs]. So, this, again, all creased, but hey - what you gonna do? This outfit here, this dress, I bought this for a wedding. It was my brother in law's wedding I bought it for. And I have a photograph of my daughter, of me holding her and she was really small. She's now nineteen. So, I would have been carrying her, it would have been like two. So, I've had this for about sixteen-seventeen years. And although I bought it for a wedding I wear it to work. And people, the colouring of the dress, the kind of the chocolate and the lime, is striking to people. And they say: that's, oh wow! That's a striking colour. And then a couple of people have thought that I have spilt something. Really! And then, it's something to do with the chocolate colour and

the way it falls down the dress. And they're like: oh no! That's the pattern of the dress! So, it's quite an unusual dress and so I like it very much. I've worn it a lot.



Figure A.120

Back in the US, Annabelle had two favourite brands that both sold very inexpensive clothing which she says *lasted the test of time*. She has multiple dresses and skirts from both companies, most of which she still wears when she gets a chance. What she likes is the combination of plain design, low price, and durability, and she comments that she has been finding it hard to find similar clothing in the UK.

This, again, is a very old dress that I have, I bought that in Florida [Figure A.121]. And I really like that, I wear it with a ballet top which I think is here [looking through the rail] - oh yeah, here it is! I wear it with that. So, I wear those two together. And that's a really nice thing to wear like to a garden party in the summer. That kind of thing. So, I don't know, but I like that a lot. It was very inexpensive. Like this brand in the States - Dress Barn - I probably paid maybe twenty US dollars for it at the most. And it came with this - so it came as a pair. So, very cheap clothing. But it's stood the test of time. Because it hasn't yellowed, and I've had it for ages! Ages and ages and ages.



Figure A.121

There are several pieces from this time which Annabelle no longer wears, or wears very little, one example being a full knee-length skirt with large black and white floral pattern, which Annabelle feels makes combinations with other things difficult [Figure A.122]. Despite this, she would find it hard to part with any of these items, even if they are rarely worn. *It reminds me of the tropics and I just don't want to let go of that part of my life, you know?*, she explains holding her black and white skirt at her waist, possibly considering if she could wear it after all.



Figure A.122

Clothes full of memories

For the same reasons, Annabelle found it extremely difficult to discard her lifetime collection of concert T-shirts which she used to buy as souvenirs at every concert she would go to. *It was VERY hard for me to get rid of them, she says, but at some point, you've got to say: I can't just keep on taking clothes around with me just because of - I have them - you know.* She says she tends to get attached to clothes and has quite a few garments with a lot of sentimental value, such as for example a pleated skirt with a dropped yoke that she bought when her daughter was little and which she then wore almost fifteen years later to the first date with her current boyfriend [Figure A.123].

This one kind of always reminds me, I've had this a very long time. This skirt, it's a Roxy skirt - I bought it in Florida. I bought it when my daughter was really little and she is now, as I said, nineteen. So, I've probably had this skirt twenty years. And so, when I was going out for my first date with my boyfriend, I was going on my first date with him and I was with my mother and she said: you're not going out wearing that, are you? I was like: yeah, yeah, I'm gonna go out wearing this! And I was like: oh! Maybe I'm not wearing the right thing. But her really likes this and when I wear it he's like: I remember you wore that on our very first date. So, it's very nice to wear that and remember that memory? And I kind of had that - funny thing that when my mother was saying: oh, you're not wearing the right thing. Obviously, I wore the right thing. And it was a beautiful summer's day and, you know, I remember thinking: oh no, it's exactly the right thing to wear.



Figure A.123

Another garment that Annabelle strongly associates with fond memories of her loved ones is a dress that she bought on a French holiday with her late father [Figure A.124]. Unfortunately, she does not get to wear it that often because the style is best suited for a truly hot day on a summer holiday and for it to look its best it also requires a tan. Although she only found one opportunity to wear that dress last summer, she says she is very attached to it and would love to wear it more often - weather and occasion permitting.

This is one of my favourite things to wear in the summer. I wear this as a dress, and I've got a white dress I wear underneath it. But I don't know where it is? Anyway, it was bought for me in south of France, Saint Tropez. And it's very, for me, very typically French. Although, I think it has some, you know, obviously has some things maybe from Morocco. I don't know [smiles]. But I like it because it's so French. And I wear it, I wear it as a dress. I don't think it was designed as a dress? But because it's long, there it is! There's the dress. So, I wear it with this underneath - like that [showing]. Because otherwise it's way too see through. So, I wear it like that and then that on top. And then I've got some brilliant shoes that I love, that I wear with it. So, these shoes really go well with that outfit. Do you know what I mean? They, they just, it's just the two go together really well.



Figure A.124

Second-hand clothes

Annabelle does not really browse charity shops on her own, but she has a friend who enjoys charity shopping and so occasionally they may go together. She is also happy to go in by herself if something in the shop window catches her interest. This is how she found another of her favourite holiday outfits that always gets noticed when she wears it [Figure A.125].

Yeah, this is a good one! I really like this! Now, I got this from like a charity stock shop and it looks really good on [laughs]. And it's really good, kind of, I can tell when I'm wearing this that people stop and look at that - look at it. And I don't know if it's the words on it, or, again, it's figure hugging. But it's gotta slit down the side and I wear it normally when I'm - it's beachwear. You know, it's beachwear. And I don't know whether it's just the words on it, or? You see it? There - that's back to front [the letters].



Figure A.125

Work outfits

When it comes to work wear, the everyday outfits in Annabelle's current job are much less formal than the dress code she was used to in the US. However, despite a more relaxed dress culture,

Annabelle still feels *that it's important to dress for your best appearance* and to *make an effort* with one's work wear. Her outfit on a standard working day consists of a straight cut, over the knee long skirt, a top, a cardigan and boots or low heel shoes. She has quite a collection of work skirts, many of which she bought second-hand, and she usually combines these with light tops [Figures A.126-127].

So, most of the stuff here, these kinds of things, that's what I wear to work. All this stuff here. Like this is my standard work wear [laughs]. All those, all these things, these kinds of skirts - that's just, I wear those kind of on everyday basis. (...) This one is my deliberate attempt to try to break away from beige and black, all right? I really tried to get something that was brighter. (...) So, yeah, when I look at them I'm like - they're kind of dull in that respect. Again, this is Next, this is Next, I think this is thrift store. In fact, this is thrift store, that's another thrift store one. So, Next, Next, Next, these are all Next [showing] and then two thrift stores thrown in. And that one I got in Florida [the bright one]. So, when I bought these, when I bought these two I was like - I have to wear, I have to get something brighter.



Figure A.126



Figure A.127

Clothes from a work colleague

She likes the style of one of her colleagues and friends Barbara, who has over time passed to Annabelle several pieces that she felt *didn't work for her*. Apart from their colour scheme with subtle hints of brighter colours, much more lively than what Annabelle naturally tends to go for, she also appreciates the versatility of these pieces. Most of them can be combined either with cardigans for daily wear or with jackets if she needs to *smarten them up*.

So, these two skirts I really like very much. These two skirts were given to me by a friend of mine called Barbara, she's a work colleague [Figure A.128]. She is a very petite, very small, I'm gonna say probably about five foot, about five foot five and she probably would wear a size six clothing. So, very small and she gave these to me because they didn't work for her anymore. And when I tried them on they were too big for me [laughs]. And believe or not - I had to have them taken in. So, I'm gonna guess that she must have bought them and not try them on. Because they were way, way too big for me and they must have been huge for her. So, I had them taken in. I think it cost me about twenty pounds to have each one take in? But I felt like it was worth it because they're really nice, interesting designs on the skirts. And I really like the black and pink and the black and white. So, I like those two a lot and I wear them quite a lot at work.



Figure A.128

What Annabelle also likes about Barbara's choice of clothes is the fact that they mostly do not crease at all. This makes them perfect for Annabelle's quite frequent work trips to conferences and other professional events. *Ironing and me are not friends*, she says laughing, and so she consciously avoids buying clothes that would require a lot of ironing - such as for example linen items.

She gave me this dress too, which I really like [Figure A.129]. Really really like this dress. Again, great travel dress! This material? You can scrunch it up, it can be in the corner there on the floor for two days [laughs] and I pick it and wear it and it looks great. It's a really good material and the way that the dress is designed, with this kind of stained glass effect, with the stained-glass window and the arch, it gives you shape. It gives you shape; you know. And so, it looks really good when I wear it with a jacket. Like I wear it with a jacket - I'll get the jacket I wear it with [Figure A.130]. So, it can be more formal, or I can just wear it with a cardigan? So, I quite often wear it with this jacket, and this really makes it look smarter. So, it looks really good.



Figure A.129



Figure A.130

Travel dresses

Recently, Annabelle bought several similar dresses, which also work well across seasons in various work situations, including travelling to conferences. She likes to travel light and not to check-in any bags, so she loves that these dresses are quite compact and can easily be packed in cabin luggage. As they do not crease, she can wear them straight away when she arrives at her destination and combines them with other garments to dress them up or down for different occasions. She bought two of these dresses at once because she knew that this style suits her and looks smart for work [Figure A.131].

I like the V-neck which I know is my kind of like, it gives me shape. And then you can, you can give it some, you can cinch it here at the waist. And it's got this nice detail, it looks really, I think they look really professional on and I wear them with this jacket if I want to smarten them up. I wear them with this blue jacket. And that works like that quite well. Yeah - I like

that. I like it. The material of the jacket works well in summer and winter because in wintertime I just put a - like a blue long sleeve shirt underneath it? So, it's good. It's quite versatile and the colour's quite versatile as well.



Figure A.131

Her mother's clothes

As we talk, it turns out that quite a few of Annabelle's favourite pieces of clothing used to belong to her mother. This seems to come to her as a surprise. *I wasn't really realizing how much of my mother's clothing I have*, she says with a smile.

In terms of colour palette, Annabelle tends to prefer subdued tones and in her everyday wear she almost invariably gravitates towards brown, beige and black. Again, this is a pattern she shares with her mother, *I think that's, it's interesting - if she was here, she would say, yeah, her wardrobe is full of brown and beige as well*. There was a phase when Annabelle was given a lot of cashmere her mother no longer wore but she ended up giving most of it away as she found it was simply too much. Also, she feels *in two minds* about cashmere. *I like how it feels against my skin*, she says, *but honestly? I just guess it's too hot for me sometimes*.

She has several expensive evening dresses which her mother *couldn't bear to give away*, so Annabelle ended up having them altered to fit her figure. One example is her *standard black dress* which she wears quite often when she goes out [Figure A.132]. Yet, she also has some more casual pieces from her mother which she wears on a much more regular basis. Her favourite is a top which again does not crease and combines really well with many of Annabelle's work clothes, so she ends up wearing it quite frequently on weekdays [Figure A.133].

This was also my mother's and I wear that a lot. I wear it with, I wear it to work with a black - this black skirt and it goes very well with this, quite often with a jacket as well. So, this again, I get quite a lot of compliments on this top and get the opportunity to tell that it belonged to my mother. (...) Again, and it looks just a bit like that stained glass one [the dress from her friend Barbara - see Figures 11-12]. Because it's got that red, it just makes the black - it pops out with the black, you know? Makes the black a little less dull. But I, I like this a lot and it's really, again, travels well, you can scrunch it up.



Figure A.132



Figure A.133

Yet, one of her most treasured pieces of clothing is a fur coat inherited from her grandmother which still retains a smell that takes Annabelle back to her childhood memories each time she puts it on [Figures A.134-136].

I got a vintage jacket that you have to see. I'm gonna go get it [leaves downstairs]. (...) Now! This was my grandmother's, so it's very old and it was made in Cape Town [smiles and shows me the label]. It's lambs wool, I believe. I believe, I believe so - I don't honestly know. But I do know that it's been handed down to me and I wear it. It's an evening - and I wear it in the evening. So, when I go out and I'm wearing that black outfit [from her mother - see Figure 14] I'll wear this in the evenings. But, it smells of my grandmother [laughs]. I should have it - I should have it dry-cleaned but I don't. I haven't, yeah, it reminds me of her. Yeah, yeah, it's got a very distinct - distinct smell. And it's amazing! There's no way I could ever get rid of this jacket. And when my mother gave it to me, I was absolutely delighted! And I probably, of course I don't wear it very much, I don't wanna leave it anywhere. I don't want it to get really damaged? But when I do wear it, you don't see very much of this anymore. You know, it's very very different. I love that!



Figure A.134



Figure A.135



Figure A.136

Decisiveness

Generally, Annabelle has *quite plain taste* in colour and pattern and she prefers straight cuts and *figure hugging* styles. She also feels that V-shaped necklines *suit her frame* and so she defaults to choosing those when clothes shopping. Several garments that she received as gifts do not quite fit in with these preferences and so she either never wears them at all or wears them only occasionally. There are two dresses bought for her by her boyfriend which she likes for that reason, but she is not entirely comfortable with the style: *these are unusual dresses, yeah, this neckline is a little different for me and it just about works - I can get away with it, just about.*

However, Annabelle is adamant that when she buys clothes for herself, she knows what she wants and does not usually have second thoughts. *If I'm gonna buy it, I like it and I stick it through*, she says decisively. Similarly, apart from some fairly rare exceptions such as her Florida clothes mentioned above [see Figure A.122], Annabelle does, on the whole, discard the clothes that she does not use.

Connections through clothes

Annabelle's sense of style and her decisiveness about what she likes and does not like to wear is not necessarily incompatible with her being able to appreciate and wear clothing with primarily sentimental value. For example, she has several jumpers that were passed down to her by her boyfriend's mother and although she may not normally wear most these, she puts them on when her boyfriend's mother is around. Her boyfriend's mother, in turn, wears the jewellery that Annabelle had given to her when she comes to visit, and Annabelle likes that. Also, she keeps a jumper that belonged to her father and sometimes wears it at weekends despite it being far too big for her as it reminds her of her father, with whom she was very close.

I have a handkerchief of his I keep in my pocket. So, you know, those kinds of things - clothes hold so many memories. And you, so when I wear this, like sometimes I can't wear it because it makes me feel sad, you know? But then it's nice to have them. So, you know, it's a mixture of the two. Like, would you rather not have any of his belongings and then not be reminded? Or be reminded and feel sad [smiles].

The piece she holds onto most now though is another jumper, one that belongs to her daughter who is now at university in the US [Figure A.137]. She left this jumper behind and Annabelle now wears it when she really misses her. *I wear it and I feel like, you know, because it's nice and cosy and warm, it's like that feeling of hugging her, like I - almost like I can hug it, you know? - or is it hugging me?*, she says stroking the jumper with a gentle smile.



Figure A.137

A.8 EMMA: My eyes must just be tuned into patterns

ABOUT EMMA

Emma is an arts and heritage education consultant in her mid-forties. She lives with her husband and two sons aged seven and eight in their house in a small town in Kirklees, West Yorkshire. Emma is English and she has lived in Yorkshire for most of her life. She recently left full-time employment to run a freelance consultancy and now mostly works from home.

PREPARING FOR THE INTERVIEW

I visited Emma on a weekday afternoon, shortly after she started working freelance and was getting used to her new work pattern. She greeted me at the door and because this was the first time we met in person, we took some time over a cup of tea for a mutual introduction and to clarify any details about the research. Emma's husband was also at home, he was getting ready to start working on a building job in another part of the house, but he briefly joined us to say hello. He seemed curious about my research and so all three of us had a short conversation during which I explained my interest in the topic, my approach to the research and our conversation soon turned to sustainable fashion, disposability and some high street brands. Like ahead of the rest of my interviews, while providing my participants with all the information they needed to make informed decisions about taking part in the research, I also tried to keep the information about the aims of my research to a minimum to avoid pre-framing my interviewee's expectations and answers (see Chapter 5.1, p. 125). However, the presence of Emma's husband made disclosing more than I would have otherwise wished to share ahead of the interview practically unavoidable. To reiterate a point made earlier in Chapter 5.1 then, while I believe this did not compromise the results of my conversation with Emma in any significant way, I was aware that Emma's repeated references to high street shops such as Primark and her descriptions of clothes she had bought there may have been to some extent influenced by our pre-interview discussion.

EMMA'S WARDROBE

Like Julie, Louise and Kathryn, Emma too was concerned she did not have enough clothes that I could find interesting. *Quite a lot of my wardrobe is boring pieces I really like*, she told me when I first

approached her. Yet, she liked the focus of my research and was curious so agreed to take part. After further reassurance and our introductory discussion in the kitchen, Emma invited me upstairs where our conversation continued smoothly without the need for extra prompts.

The main storage for Emma's clothing is in her bedroom, where she and her husband each have a hanging wardrobe with full width drawers at the bottom. However, Emma's clothing tends to overflow into her husband's space. Extra storage is provided by baskets at the top and under each wardrobe and Emma also stores some old dresses, which she keeps for fabrics, under the bed. *I seem to hoard things* she tells me as she opens her wardrobe and says she keeps wearing many of her clothes *even when they're falling to bits*. She points to the bottom edge of a top that we see first as she opens the wardrobe door as has recently worn it [Figure A.138].

Yeah, well, I am getting to a point with that one when I keep finding bits on it and then I always pull them off. [laughs] But then, you know, when you sort of stop - sometimes you stop looking at something objectively. You're just putting it on because, well, that one I've put on recently. I don't know why I put it on but it's, I think it's because couple of people have gone like: ah, I really like your top [laughs]. And I quite like it, but, yeah, it is getting a bit raggedy and old.



Figure A.138

Second-hand clothes

Emma says that she *would always prefer to buy second-hand clothes for many reasons* and her second-hand garments span twenty-five years since the time she started buying second-hand as a student. When she gets a chance, she likes to alter little details like buttons or darts on her second-hand finds and so she has a pile of future projects by her sewing machine. The most recent second-hand additions to her wardrobe are two vintage shirts with bright patterns that she bought at a festival [Figure A.139].

I got those last year - that one and that one - from a festival that I went to. It was a vintage shop at a festival, but I went to it with my boys and we were trying on shirts for fun. So, they chose these ones for me - this one and this one. But I really like them.

[So do you wear those?]

Yeah, I wear those ones all the time. Bet they're - like that's probably a seventies one? That one's an old Pringle one. So, I think that's probably, I don't know how old that one is. Can't tell. You can sometimes tell from the label, can't you? It's an old one and it's the fabrics, that kind of, but I really like them. I didn't know it was Pringle when I bought it. I just tried it on and thought I really like it.



Figure A.139

Her grandmother's and mother's clothes

Apart from her second-hand and charity shop finds, Emma also has quite a few clothes that used to belong to her mother and her late grandmother. Many of these are between forty and sixty years old and although Emma is conscious that some of the styles may not necessarily be *flattering* for her figure, she still likes wearing these clothes. *These are sort of my favourites, she says, because I know that nobody else has got these.* Probably the oldest is a lambswool top with intricate surface beading that Emma's grandmother gave her long time ago for a ball at a university [Figure A.140]. The silk lining now seems slightly bigger than it should be, so Emma suspects the top may have been accidentally washed at some point. She has worn it a few times in the past, but she is increasingly conscious that the top is in fact quite fragile. She is afraid that *it will start falling to bits* and this is one of the main reasons why she does not wear it very often anymore.

And again, I'm not - don't know how flattering, well, I just like it. Although I haven't worn it recently. I don't go out anywhere to wear it, so I've started wearing things - like nice things - just for general wear [laughs] because otherwise I'd never wear them. But I haven't been out to wear this. (...) I love it so much that it's kind of irreplaceable that.



Figure A.140

Some of her “inherited” garments, particularly those from her grandmother, may perhaps be more suitable for special occasions. However, there are also several items that Emma wears on a fairly regular basis. Among these is a jacket and two dresses that her mum gave her some year ago.

Then I’ve got things like this, which is my mum’s [Figures A.141-142]. That’s like a real favourite thing of mine because she would have worn that in the sixties? Or seventies maybe? And I really like the shape of it on me and the colour and the fabric. So, I wear that loads and I am always scared of it falling to bits, actually.

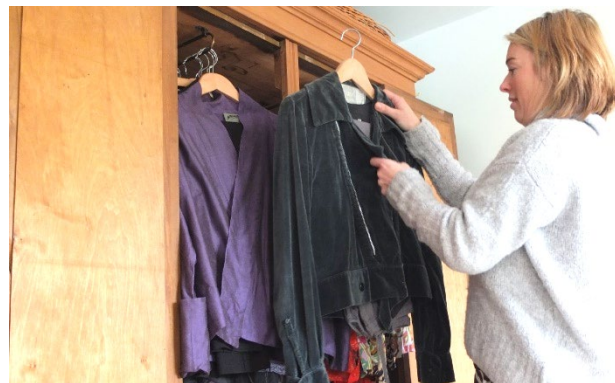


Figure A.141



Figure A.142

The two dresses Emma likes the most are both from the times she was a child and she remembers her mum wearing one of them [Figures A.143-145]. She has done minor repairs on the dresses previously but admits that normally she simply wears them without actually examining them in great detail, and so she is surprised by the number of tiny holes we discovered at a closer inspection.

Yeah! And this is mum's and I wear this fairly often, although it's a bit weird. But I really like it because it was mum's again and I really like the buttons because they're fabric covered buttons. And I wear it with jeans. See? It's getting - it has got all holes in it and stuff but it's a Biba one. So it's, I think that must have attracted me a little bit that it's like an original Biba [laughs], not the new Biba.



Figure A.143



Figure A.144

What she particularly likes about the other dress is the way the fabric hangs and although she again suspects the style may not be ideal for her figure, because of her larger bosom, she still enjoys wearing it. *I don't care*, she says laughing, *I just like it anyway*. Again, the main consideration when it

comes to wearing this dress is that it is in fact quite fragile after all the years and so Emma is worried that it is gradually starting to fall apart. For Emma, *there is something about the slightly worn*. Because someone wore it before, second-hand clothing is *not quite so perfect, it doesn't look like you've just stepped out of a shop* and it is the feeling of not looking entirely *pristine* that Emma seems to like about it.



Figure A.145

High-street and clothes shopping

At the same time, she comments on some paradoxes involved in her wardrobe, as well as in her ideal as opposed to real shopping habits. For example, Emma notices that although *what I'm wearing today is like new bought stuff, the clothes that I wear, that I think about myself wearing most often are the second-hand things? probably?* A good example of the tension between her ideals and reality is a top that she likes very much because of its pattern and shape, but she also feels:

slightly EMBARRASSED that it's Primark because I HAVE little phases of going - I'm NEVER going shopping in any of those shops - I'm going ONLY buy second-hand and if I buy something new I'll just buy one thing from somewhere that's a bit more ethically aware.

Her top, by her own admission, is just one proof that Emma does *not quite always follow that*. Availability and affordability of ethically produced clothing are among some of the reasons. It is practically impossible to buy ethical fashion in the high street and when Emma occasionally sees something interesting in the local fair trade shop or one of the small boutiques in Manchester, she

generally feels she cannot afford to shop in these places. She also comments that even if she could, she would probably find it hard to *justify* spending that much on a piece of clothing.

One of Emma's newest pieces is a skirt that she *sort of bought by accident* about two months ago. She had seen a similar one on someone in the street and so she was attracted to the look when she spotted it in a shop [Figure A.146].

It's just a Zara one, you know, basic one. But I just like the colour of it and that it's not, you know, it's a faux leather. It's not real, obviously. So, that's probably, just thinking...that's probably the newest thing I've bought, and I've worn that loads of times already.



Figure A.146

Emma says that for ethical reasons she would not have bought the skirt if it was real leather, even if it had been second-hand. On the other hand, however, she is also aware that she wears leather shoes: *so I don't quite know where my boundaries are*, she admits with a laugh.

Home-sewing and alterations

When time allows, Emma likes to do some home sewing, mainly repairs and slight alterations to second-hand and vintage items that she buys in charity shops. She often changes buttons or adds extra darts to make each item *a bit different*. Her sewing machine is next door where she also keeps her *pile of I'm going to do something with these things*, but she also admits that due to a lack of time, *then I haven't done anything again*. Over the years she also made several new pieces by copying the shape of her existing garments. She says her sewing skills are limited and the quality of her creations is also affected by lack of time, which means she usually makes things very quickly. Despite this, she

enjoys wearing them and would like to do more sewing in the future. She shows me a skirt that she made from a fabric that was left over from a top she wore for her wedding [Figure A.147].

The thing is that I know that it's really crappily made and I make things really quickly because I know I don't have the time to do it. So, it hasn't got a lining and it's not - I didn't use a pattern or anything. It's really badly made [smiles] but it looks all right on. Anyway, yeah, so I was quite pleased that that happened. (...) It's not even, you know, all the interfacing is sticking together because I haven't done a lining even. I really like the fabric, yeah [smiles].

[So, do you wear that skirt now?]

Yeah, I wore that. Well, I haven't worn it recently. I wore it over summer quite a lot. I wear this, I do. And I keep this - this sometimes makes its way onto the pile of things that need something doing to them? Like I really need to, I need to put a lining in it. I mean when I've worn that - I don't wear clothes so that I get comments, obviously. But lots of people have said: I really like the fabric of that.



Figure A.147

Wedding outfits

It was the striking pattern of the fabric that first attracted Emma to the idea of having it made into a corset for her wedding by someone who was offering corset-making on Etsy [Figure A.148]. To Emma's great distress, when the corset arrived from the United States, it was far too big because there was a misunderstanding about measurements between inches and centimetres. She therefore

had to have it altered at the local repair shop. Since then, Emma has worn the top several times, usually *unglamourized* with jeans, but perhaps not as often as she would like. *I keep wanting to wear this, but I haven't*, she says.



Figure A.148

At her wedding five years ago, Emma then wore her corset top with a skirt that she had had for many years as she bought it in a second-hand shop as a student [Figures A.149-150].

I wore this skirt for the wedding. I bought this when I was about eighteen? Just randomly because I really loved the colour of it and it was from a second-hand shop like Oxfam or something like that. And I really like the raw silk. And it fitted me then, and then, I've had it in the wardrobe since. So, that's from eighteen and I'm forty-five now. Whatever that is - it's like eighteen - twenty-eight? And then when we were gonna get married, I just remembered that it was in the cupboard. But it's just started to, it's just falling all to bits now. On the wedding night it all started to fall to bits [laughs]. By the evening - it was all all right during the day except that it's quite tight, but it all started to come apart.



Figure A.149



Figure A.150

She still likes the shape of the skirt, especially the pleated slit at the back and she asked for my advice on whether it could still be repaired. At the same time, she is aware that the fabric is possibly too fragile now and so any repairs in one part are likely to lead to new tears elsewhere. She would,

however, like to reuse at least some sections in the future and so the skirt is probably going to find its way to Emma's repair pile at some point.

When the skirt started falling apart during the wedding reception, Emma changed into a velvet jumpsuit that she had brought just in case [Figure A.151]. Like the skirt, the jumpsuit was not bought especially for this occasion, and even though it came from a designer's outlet, she says it was still probably one of the most expensive pieces of clothing she has ever bought.

I really like that, that shape suits me. (...) I wore that at my wedding. I got changed at about eleven o'clock at night when I realized the skirt was breaking [laughs] and I brought this with me to wear in case. I got this from that outlet, you know, the French Connection outlet in York. But I think this does suit me. I think it does, anyway. And I like it because it's a bit different as well? But that fabric, 'cause it's heavy and it drops, that looks okay on me.



Figure A.151

Favourite pair of trousers

Another piece that goes as far back as her wedding skirt is a pair of trousers that Emma also bought while she was a student [Figure A.152]. She still likes these very much and even after twenty-five years, she says she would buy another pair if it was possible.

These are my favourite trousers that I've had since I was twenty [smile]. I love them. Yeah, quite often I'll buy them because they're the only pair left [smile] and then take them up in a shit fashion [laugh].

[Do you still wear them?]

Yeah, yeah, I still wear them. Haven't worn them last couple of months but they're not bad condition, actually. 'Cause they're quite old. And I can't find, so I would buy, you know, sometimes I look for another pair like this. I wouldn't throw these away because I really like them. But I would like another pair.



Figure A.152

Work clothes

Although Emma's wardrobe is still loosely divided into *work side* and *not work side*, she feels that since she started working for herself *the lines have blurred* to a certain extent. She thinks this may also partly have to do with her age and her stronger professional confidence. *Obviously, some things I wouldn't wear to a meeting*, she admits, but at the same time she no longer feels the necessity for a strong professional look in quite the same way as she did when she started her first bigger job. *Then I had the idea of, you know, you supposed to look like this as a professional working woman*, she recalls. She still keeps one trouser suit from this time [Figure A.153], mainly because she likes the shape of it, but her work wardrobe is very different now. Among her work staples are several pairs of black trousers which she wears combined with various tops [Figure A.154].



Figure A.153

Those trousers, really boring, but I reckon I've had them, I've had these ones since I lived in Leeds. So, they're about seventeen years old? And they've been stitched and I fell over and there's a hole in the knee but I stitched that up. And then with my black trousers, because I wear them, you know I wear them quite a lot, I've got various different black trousers, I just thought I'd redye them all the other day? Just because they were all fading?

[I was going to say that they look incredibly black considering you've had them for quite a while.]

No, I've just, really recently done them. So, I did loads of them - I did them and I did some shirts and I was like: great! Look! They look new again! [laugh] Yeah, I wear those all the time.



Figure A.154

Apart from perhaps developing her own take on her professional wardrobe over the years, Emma feels that the way she dresses has not transformed with her age or motherhood in any considerable way, *I think I just always did that kind of, quite liked different things; I think maybe I've become more confident about wearing some of those things*. This is why she was taken aback by her friend's recent comment on her favourite pair of shorts [see Figure 18], which, the friend said, were now verging on unsuitable for Emma's age. *I hadn't even, it hadn't even crossed my mind that I might be getting too old to wear certain things?*, Emma says with astonishment, *it just had not crossed my mind, I don't buy things and think: that's probably my age, or my stage*.

Striking patterns

Emma likes her shorts because they are comfortable, and she also finds their pattern attractive. Striking patterns are in fact what often draws Emma to a piece of clothing. *My eyes must just be tuned into patterns*, she says, and she is particularly fond of Chinese dragon and animal prints. One example is a black tunic with white cranes that she bought in French Connection, which she normally finds *all right but a bit boring* [Figure A.155]. On a different occasion a pattern attracted her to a piece she spotted in a shopping centre when she was not even clothes shopping [Figure A.156].



Figure A.155

This fits my thing of buying things that have got quite nice pattern on them. But this is old, and I haven't ever had to repair it or anything and I really like it. But it's from Primark and there's something where I go, there's something, it's not particularly well made. I mean it's just all right, but I like it because of the shape of it, actually, and the fabric. But I would never normally buy clothes in Primark. I can't even remember why I was - I think I was walking through the one in Manchester because you can get out of one of the entrances. (...) And it's, actually, I realized - not at the time but after - that it's quite, it's similar shape to that green velvet one of my mum. Not far of that. So, I've had that, I've had that probably about ten years maybe.



Figure A.156

Despite having a good proportion of newly bought garments, Emma says that one of the reasons why she generally does not like shopping in high street shops is that the clothes sold there are often *boring* and *lifeless*, unlike her second-hand clothes and hand-me-downs which she feels *have got some life in them somehow*. This is also the case with the clothes she made herself, which despite their inferior quality in terms of making, often have interesting history connected to the fabric they were made from and also Emma's memories of wearing them.

I've just seen something that I've had, that I made but I've had a long time [Figure A.157]. I'll quickly show you. I used to wear this to raves. But I made this and what I like about this is that I made it and I didn't use a pattern again. I just used another top that I've got, that's like it, but I've managed. Well, the fabric, I bought the fabric in Australia when I went travelling and I carried it. I don't think I even carried it back with me, I think I sent a parcel back to my mum and dad's house with all these things that I'd bought. And I'd bought this fabric and then when I got back I made it. So, I still wear that now.



Figure A.157

Emma says she cannot believe she used to wear the tunic with bare legs and just trainers at one time but she still loves the pattern which, as it turns out, reminds her of many clothes her grandmother had from the times when she with her husband and Emma's father lived in Singapore.

A.9 MARY: I just love those colours zinging together

ABOUT MARY

Mary is a higher education manager in her mid-forties. She lives with her partner on their smallholding on the edge of Sheffield, South Yorkshire. Mary is English, but her mother was American, and Mary still regularly visits her family in the US.

PREPARING FOR THE INTERVIEW

Mary and I arranged to meet on a Saturday morning when she and her partner were unusually free in the middle of a barn restoration project. I arrived slightly late because of fresh snow but my late arrival seemed to have suited Mary as she felt a little tired after the whole week and a late night with friends. Her partner let me in and asked me to join Mary upstairs, where she had already prepared some clothes for us to look through.

Because she was not feeling her best, Mary had some concerns about photography but when I reassured her that she will be able to look through all of the photos and remove anything that she does not feel comfortable with, she was more relaxed and ready to start. As soon as she started showing me some of her favourite clothes, she looked instantly refreshed and focused, obviously enjoying the experience.

MARY'S WARDROBE(S)

The main storage for Mary's clothing is in the bedroom, where she has a rail for hanging clothes and an open shelf for folded clothes, shoes, and accessories. Some of her knitwear is stored in protective zip bags under the bed and she recently also started keeping her seasonal cashmere in the freezer. An extra wardrobe in the spare room is for her partner's clothes and for what she describes as the *stuff that I haven't quite got rid of*. She also has another bag of unworn clothes in the attic. Mary admits she is not very good at *getting rid of things* and tends to *hang onto stuff*. *I think I'd find it difficult to admit that I wasn't wearing something anymore, that I'd made a mistake, that I'd wasted money*, she explains.

Skirts

Mary was very systematic in the way she decided to show me her wardrobe. She gave me quite a thorough overview by dividing her clothes into categories - skirts, dresses, outerwear, jackets, tops, trousers, and knitwear. When I arrived, she already had a pile of her skirts laid out on the bed, with some of her oldest favourites on the top.

So, I suppose I have, I have some favourite items that I wouldn't necessarily wear very often but I like them because they're beautiful, she begins showing me a skirt that she has just recovered from the bottom layer of her pile [Figures A.158-159].

You know, I haven't worn this huge numbers of times, but this is one of my favourite skirts. This is from Whistles, from probably the best part of twenty years ago? Maybe more. Some of their stuff, I don't know, they're not quite as exciting as they were. So, you have things that you just hang onto for years because you just love the beautifulness of the fabric and that kind of thing.



Figure A.158

Like this skirt, many of Mary's things are quite *dressy*. Therefore, what she likes to do is to dress them up and down, *enjoying them in different ways* and *bringing the changes a bit*. For example, she shows me how she sometimes combines this skirt with a pin stripe jacket that was once a part of a suit that she used to wear very often.

So, for example that skirt - if I was getting dressed up for a summer outfit, I'd probably put a pink top with it and some sandals. But I can also try to wear it to work and sort of, I know it sounds a bit odd, but combining it with like a dark pin stripe.



Figure A.159

So that's, similarly, I don't know - fifteen years old. So, I do definitely hang onto stuff. And get annoyed if I make a mistake? So, I like to buy things that I really definitely like. That came with a skirt and I wore the skirt to death and it kind of - the slit at the back ripped, so I think I'll end up getting rid of the skirt. And also, the skirt is now too small? But I've managed to hang onto the jacket.

Another of Mary's favourite *beautiful* and *dressy* skirts is by the Danish label Birger and Mikkelsen [Figure A.160]. Like with the previous one, she has had this for many years.

I just love this. I do quite like of that folk type influence. I haven't worn this huge numbers of times, but it was just beautiful, and I had to get it. That's probably about twenty years as well. But, to be honest, worn a lot less than a lot of the other things.



Figure A.160

This one I wore to my mum's cousin's funeral, actually. We were in America and, you know, it was a summer funeral and I wasn't quite sure what to wear and I ended up wearing it with these shoes and that top [showing] and then a black, like a black blouse on the top of it. And it was nice to be kind of funerally-ish but also not just kind of all black. So, I'm definitely hanging onto that.

On a more practical side then, there is a black skirt that Mary has just recovered from her washing pile to show me [Figure A.161]. It was given to her by her aunt who no longer wore it. Although Mary believes that handing things down does not always work, in this case it seems to have worked exceptionally well.

This skirt is not as exciting but it's a black work skirt and this my aunt gave me as a cast off. And it's amazing because it just really suits my shape? So, if I wear, you know, a black top and cardigan and some shoes, it just looks instantly smart? And I wash it by hand. It says dry clean, but I don't dry clean it. So, since she gave that to me two years ago, I've probably worn it maybe hundreds of times? And it's, underneath, the fabric on the slip is starting to kind of bobble and all the rest of it but that's not terribly noticeable. But the cut, the cut just works.



Figure A.161

At the same time, Mary tells me that there is a common issue that she has with several skirts from her collection. Finding tops to combine them with tends to be rather difficult and so she usually ends up wearing the same combination with most - her black draped neck top from Vivienne Westwood's Anglomania and a silk cashmere cardigan from Jigsaw. However, as a result, the top in particular is starting to look worn, *the fabric is starting to kind of sag a little*. Mary therefore wishes that she had bought a few of the same because she has not been able to find anything similar since. The cut of the top is very clever, she explains, *it's all sort of tucked in up here and then at the back of the neck*, she shows me. Both the cut and the colour make the top very flattering and easy to combine with other things [Figures A.161-162].



Figure A.162

Fabrics, colours, and patterns

Mary loves fabrics, colours, and patterns as they give her pleasure. She tells me that her recent attempt at a major house clear out made her realize that one of the things she truly cares about and wants to keep is *the nice collection of clothes*. Buying clothes is a long-term investment for Mary and so she aims to buy only things that she *really definitely* likes. She finds that age is an advantage in this respect, because *a part of getting older is really just knowing what works for your shape and colouring and then you make less mistakes*. She likes *classic designs* and things that are not *overtly fashionable* because it is disappointing to *buy something that's in fashion and then it looks unfashionable a year later*.

Dresses

Possibly the largest category in Mary's wardrobe are dresses [Figure A.163]. *I have got a lot of dresses*, she admits, *it's slightly hard to justify how many I've got*.



Figure A.163

Her collection of dresses includes newly bought pieces, often from many years ago, as well as relatively more recent purchases from e-Bay. Mary often uses e-Bay to look for styles that she liked in past collections and later regretted not having bought them. In quite a few cases then, she found the same dress many years later and bought it for a fraction of the original price.

She also tells me that several years back she had gone through a *splurge* phase when she bought some rather expensive clothes in high end boutiques. Now, however, she is no longer interested and feels *more into getting bargains of e-Bay*. Because of her busy work-farm lifestyle and also due to

the fact that the nearest shops of her favourite labels such as Brora or TOAST are almost two hours' drive away, in recent years most of Mary's clothes shopping has taken place on-line.

This I got of e-Bay, this is Brora [Figure A.164]. I think it's from a long time ago because I've been kind of looking at their stuff years and this must be early two thousands, at least. And I absolutely love it! The colours just work with my skin tone and I take the belt off that favourite jacket of mine, stick a belt on there. And then I've got a cardigan - this is relatively recent. Wear it with that. But lot of these are kind of splotchy things. So, I've obviously got a bit of a thing for splotchy patterns [Figure A.165].



Figure A.164



Figure A.165

Another dress Mary likes very much also comes from her favourite label Brora. It too was bought on-line, not on e-Bay though but in Brora's seasonal sale [Figures A.166-167].

So, I think all of these dresses are all e-Bay, this I got on sale. Wasn't sure, wasn't really sure about it, but then bought it and wondered why on earth I hadn't bought it before because, I don't know, it's just very flattering. There's a keyhole there, but you don't feel like you've got too much on show. Just feel very kind of pretty and nice in it.



Figure A.166



Figure A.167

One of the more recent additions to her wardrobe is a pinafore style dress that fits perfectly and is truly versatile, so Mary has quickly fallen in love with it [Figure A.168].

This one is bought this last winter and I absolutely adore it. The cut of it is just perfect, you know, kind of the way it cinches at the waist. So, I'd wear that with turtleneck. So, I've got one of these in, this is kind of like an ivy colour, but I've also got one in cream colour. So, sort of wear it to work, you know, underneath there. And then I've also, wore it out with Alex [partner], actually. I wore kind of high heels with it? It looked very smart. That was good fun.



Figure A.168

Then there is another dress, one she bought during her *splurge* phase. It also fits her very well and Mary feels good when she wears it [Figure A.169]. However, it got slightly damaged through wear and so the fit is no longer as perfect as it used to be.

This dress is a nice kind of cut with the gathering down the sides and I feel very smart in it. But, unfortunately, I think one time when I wore it I kind of just - you know when you're like hitching yourself - and I heard a couple of threads snap. So, I think it sags slightly lower than it should which is frustrating. That's the problem with wearing clothes, you see?



Figure A.169

Work wardrobe

Mary makes very clear distinctions between her work and her weekend wardrobe. She believes that smart self-presentation is an important facet of professional life. *I think going in and looking smart is part of it, it's not a bad thing*, she tells me. However, she also notices that women's office wear

has been changing over the past few years. Previously, suits seemed to be the accepted norm and so she used to wear hers so often that most of them have now *disintegrated and fallen apart*. More recently though, Mary thinks that *it's more of a case that women will wear dresses and look smart that way*. Being able to use dresses for work makes them *very wearable*. *There's something about a dress, I don't know, it's hard to put into words*, Mary sighs.

Jackets

For her work wear, she usually combines dresses with jackets. Again, she has a wide selection to fall back on. What is also important in this context, Mary confesses, is her *guilty secret* which says she would never share with any of her friends. However, because she feels this is significant when looking at her wardrobe and her clothes shopping habits, she thought I should know.

Despite her quite neutral attitude to the Royal Family, Mary tells me that over some last few years she found herself *copying* some of the outfits worn by the Duchess of Cambridge. She explains this by the fact that although in the past she used to enjoy browsing shops, her busy lifestyle now makes it impossible for her to invest the time and the energy anymore. So, although she is still interested in clothes, as her extensive collection proves, Mary does not go *physically* clothes shopping very often. As a result, *you end up gravitating towards things that you know*, she says. When the Duchess of Cambridge started appearing in the media, Mary thought *she looked quite smart and presentable, she kind of looked elegant and lady-like*. So, even if this might be a *lazy way of dressing*, Mary finds that somehow *you just kind of latch onto that*.

In this way, she bought several dresses and jackets, some of which became staples of her work wardrobe to such an extent that she ended up buying replacements when the original piece was worn out [Figure A.170].

Then the other thing I've done, where I've copied her, is also this jacket. This is actually the second jacket that I've bought, just because the cut is fantastic! Now, the earlier version of this, I'll bring it through from the other room. They've sort of kept selling it because they can keep selling it.



Figure A.170

[So, one can still get it?]

Yeah. So, this is the one, that's falling to bits - can you see? How I've worn this [laughs]. So, I bought one nearer the time, I've worn it heavily to work and it's just started to look really shabby. I mean, if I took it to the dry cleaners it would probably freshen up a bit now. But the lapels are just, really like disintegrated. So, I think I'm gonna throw it away or give it to a charity shop or something.

The style of the jacket is also very versatile and so it allows combinations with many other things in Mary's wardrobe [Figures A.171-172]. She has therefore been able to wear it both to work and also dressed down in her free time, when travelling with family.

And then I wear it with a blue dress. So, she wore it with a Roland Mouret dress, in navy, and it was really beautifully cut. So, just by coincidence, I have had a blue dress in my wardrobe. This wasn't particularly expensive, just sort of medium, and there's a kind of slip that goes underneath it and there's a tie and then there's this kind of draped neck and little sleeves. So, this I wear, I wear these things almost like a uniform. (...) Yeah, so that black Vivienne Westwood top and that little cardigan is a similar thing of that kind of nice drape [see Figure]. It's a similar sort of style. So that, you know, that outfit where it's combined with the black skirt [see Figure 4], and this navy outfit, are both outfits that I just absolutely hammered.



Figure A.171

I've also worn this jacket with grey T-shirt, jeans, my mum's bag that she gave to me and boots. So, it's that thing of taking something that's smart and kind of dressing it down? When we went to Rome a few years ago I kind of wore that outfit and it just really worked. It was nice to wear it dressed down as well - always good fun when you can do that.



Figure A.172

Another example of taking inspiration from the style of the Duchess of Cambridge is what Mary calls *my I'm very very smart outfit*, worn to special occasions at work and generally events where she wants to look *really smart*. When she first tried the jacket on in the shop, she found it *quite magical* - *the way it just kind of flairs out*. However, she long deliberated about buying it because she felt that she *can't justify* getting something so *dressy*. She did buy the dress though and later also decided to get the jacket after all. She also found that the dress *looks fabulous* with an older patterned jacket she had and her brown brushed leather heels [Figure A.173]. This is now one of her most favourite smart outfits.



Figure A.173

Old clothes, new clothes

Many of Mary's clothes seem to be well over ten years old. When I ask her what she means when she refers to some of her pieces as *relatively more recent*, she clarifies that these are *five years at the most, I think*. She admits to her strong feeling that she might be *heading towards peak clothes*, a feeling that she might have more than enough now. However, the prospect of not continuing in her passion for collecting beautiful clothes still seems somewhat far-fetched to her. *I can't see myself completely stopping*, she admits honestly and continues in showing me more items going back to her *splurge* phase.

Another splurge was this coat [Figure A.174]. So, this, yeah, I just love this kind of camel Max Mara. I mean, they are, they do very classic coats but then because I'm quite petite, actually, having a little mini coat like this probably works. So, again, don't wear it hugely often but I'm not too worried that I don't wear it often because it's just a kind of beautiful thing that one would wear occasionally. The styling, kind of, I don't know how to put it into words. Would you say this is kind of nineteen fifties almost? The bracelet sleeves, I quite like the bracelet sleeves and that kind of thing. Yeah, I can imagine my grandmother, I think my grandmother was meant to have been quite glamorous. She was quite ill, so I don't remember her when she was younger, as it were, but I can imagine her wearing things like this.



Figure A.174

One of the reasons Mary likes to keep even the clothes that she does not wear, is her experience that although some clothes may not *work* temporarily, they may get another chance in the future. What is important in this respect, however, is choosing items that truly resonate, *because if there's something about it, you hang onto it and then years later it slots into place.*

One such example Mary shows me is a skirt that she had bought many years ago and did not wear for a long time - until she found a top that *just REALLY works* with it [Figure A.175]. Some things *just kind of join everything together*, she says. Just like one of her favourite cardigans that *goes with so many different things, it just kind of pulls lots of things together.*



Figure A.175

Knitwear

Mary also has an extensive collection of knitwear, mostly from her favourite brand Brora that she has been following pretty much from the brand's beginnings nearly twenty-five years ago. To protect it all from moths, she recently bought special zip up bags for cashmere that she keeps under her bed [Figure A.176]. She now also keeps bags of seasonal knitwear in the freezer.



Figure A.176

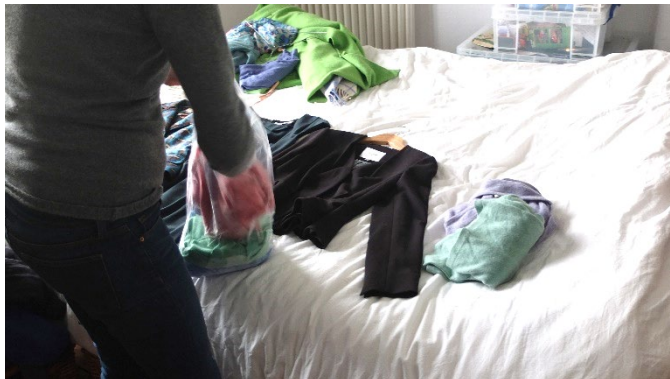


Figure A.177

Mary loves combining patterns and colours and she has her favourite ways of matching each of her knitwear pieces with other garments [Figures A.178-181]. Among all the cardigans she has, there is perhaps only one that she is not entirely sure about and suspects that getting it was *like an almost mistake*. She bought it at the end of a long winter, as a treat for her birthday: *it was really cold and miserable, and the colour just sang of summertime*. However now, because of the bright colour, she struggles *to pull it off*. Luckily, she has found one dress that works well with it [Figure A.180], so she decided to *hang onto it* for now.



Figure A.178



Figure A.179



Figure A.180



Figure A.181

Among her absolute favourites in the knitwear collection is a poncho, also from Brora, which she now has in two colour versions [Figure A.182].

I got this poncho-y thing which is really cool, actually. Feel very glamorous in this. It isn't terribly practical thing to wear if you're trying to cook wearing that [smiles]. It doesn't really work with what I'm wearing, but I can stick the necklace on [for a photo] if you want. I wear that [a turtleneck] underneath that poncho-y thing. These really work together.



Figure A.182

One other favourite is a Brora hoodie that she combines with light summer tops [Figure A.183]. Mary also often wears it for cycling and there is a woollen waistcoat she puts underneath to keep extra

warm. In addition, she has two similar hoodies, all from the same brand, one of these was passed onto Mary by her sister. When it arrived, it had a small moth hole at the front, so Mary sent it to a company that does invisible repairs. Although she says she would probably not have picked the colour herself, she decided to *hang onto it* because these hoodies are *just incredibly wearable*.



Figure A.183

Everyday clothes

Mary appreciates clothes that are versatile in terms of use. She has many clothes that are *quite dressy* and so what she likes doing is *taking these things and then enjoying them in different ways*, dressing them up and down. For the same reasons she also likes when an item of clothing can be worn to work, because in that way she can *get more use out of it*. She feels that shops are often *quite heavy weighted towards stuff which is fancy or dressy and it doesn't really reflect everyday life*. Many women, her including, then tend to *fall into trap of buying lots of those types of clothes*. She too has much more *dressy stuff* than she can regularly wear.

At the same time, the clothes that are worn on an everyday basis often get overlooked. Mary notices that this is also reflected in the way she has talked me through her wardrobe: *I've just whizzed through all the knitwear, but actually, the knitwear is stuff that you just wear a lot*.

Tops and trousers

For Mary, *the beauty of knitwear*, and tops in general, is that they can be worn with jeans on an everyday basis and so they get worn much more often than some of the more formal outfits. Practical considerations, like ironing, are especially important when it comes to these everyday items. The following two tops are among Mary's absolute favourites [Figure A.184-185].

This top I absolutely adore - it probably does need an iron. It's that thing of, in summer time, the colour really suits me, it looks really good with jeans, and it sort of feels cool, but you don't - you feel kind of covered up.



Figure A.184

Okay, so talking about ironing...This I absolutely adore but really doesn't work unless it's ironed. So, it looks a bit kind of creased and messy now. But when it's ironed it's kind of perfect. So, I'm not a fan of ironing.

[So, is that a concern when you're buying something?]

Definitely! My life revolves around not ironing.



Figure A.185

Mary combines these tops with her *kind of like jeans* of which she has several pairs in different colours [Figure A.186]. Most of these also look good with jackets so they get used quite regularly on workdays. For example, the pair in navy is especially useful for work *because you're wearing jeans, but nobody knows you're wearing jeans*. All these trousers come from J Brand and Mary buys them new from outlets on e-Bay. *I kind of know what I want, know the size that fits me, so it's easy to do that*, what is also very important, *they're comfortable as well!*



Figure A.186

Fashion

There were times when Mary used to enjoy flicking through magazines and engaging with fashion in a wider sense, but now, she feels, she has *narrowed and become a bit boring*. She has several favourite brands whose clothes fit and suit her and so that's where most of her wardrobe comes from now: *I'm tending to look at Brora, look at TOAST, I know what I'm looking for*.

She likes browsing for these brands on e-Bay, but she also follows their websites and seasonal sales. Many of her e-Bay clothes are second-hand, but otherwise Mary does not normally shop in second-hand and charity shops. On one occasion, she joined a colleague to a charity swishing event where she found a jacket that she likes very much, *it's perfect - goes with loads of things* [Figure A.187]. However, she feels that she *kind of got lucky* with that one and doubts that this would always work.



Figure A.187

To explain, she tells me about a time when she bumped into an ex-neighbour who was shopping for something to wear for a wedding. As her neighbour is the same size, Mary tried to think of something she had that her neighbour could perhaps borrow. However, she realized that because of their different *colouring and hair* most of the clothes she has would not successfully translate to her neighbour's style. This, Mary says, suddenly made her realize how much *the clothes that you pick are kind of very much a part of you*.

Favourite coat

This certainly applies when it comes to a coat that Mary bought many years ago and has worn so much that it has now *disintegrated* in multiple places [Figures A.188-191]. She bought this one new

and although it was rather expensive to begin with, considering how much wear she got out of it, Mary feels that *the cost per wear will be tiny*. She says that despite the price, if she could get another of these coats new, she would *snap it up*.



Figure A.188

So, about eleven years ago, I bought this amazing tweed coat from Brora. And the thing is, it's now fairly bedraggled and it needs an overhaul. So, lost a button from there, these lapels are curling up, which is a shame, the lining is falling to bits. But this is a coat where I would - replacing and repairing a lining can be expensive - this is a coat where I would bother. I would bother. (...) So, now it's a nice coat for a country walk. But newer, you could put some smart boots on and, you know, tie it quite tightly there and you just would look very smart, but without kind of overly dressy - if that makes sense?

So, it's that thing you can either sit around a bonfire or garden it it or look very smart in it. So, nothing can kind of quite measure up to this coat. And I haven't seen one since this. They do do nice coats, but I haven't seen one since that's really grabbed me in the same way. (...) When we moved, we first moved in here, we had no heating, no hot water. Then we got heating and hot water but there's no loft insulation. This house is absolutely freezing! And that first winter I DID practically LIVE in that coat.



Figure A.189



Figure A.190



Figure A.191

The oldest thing

Although the coat is among Mary's long-standing pieces, probably the very oldest item she owns is a T-shirt that she had bought as a student [Figure A.192]. It has now become rather baggy and is

much longer than it used to be. *It's completely just sagged, and I need, I need to throw it away*, she says, but she clearly hesitates to do so despite the fact that the shirt now reminds a rather transparent, and a bit shapeless, dress.



Figure A.192

However, Mary still loves the colours and it is easy to see that the same colour scheme still resonates in many of her current items. *I just love those colours zinging together and there's a necklace that goes with it, I just love that whole kind of thing*, Mary tells me as we finish, obviously enjoying arranging her favourite combination of knitwear pieces on the bed [Figure A.193].



Figure A.193

A.10 TANYA: I don't remember the dress, but I remember the feeling

ABOUT TANYA

Tanya is a film producer and director in her late sixties. She lives in her West London apartment and spends a lot of time travelling internationally for work. She is Slovakian by origin, but she has lived in the UK since the summer of 1968, when the news of Soviet occupation of Czechoslovakia caught her during her study trip in London. She was married and has two grown up children who live nearby.

PREPARING FOR THE INTERVIEW

As I explained in the prologue to this thesis, Tanya is a long-term client of my studio and over the years our relationship has grown into friendship. For the last five years I have taken care of all the repairs and alterations in her wardrobe and I have also made new garments for her for special occasions (about fifty commissions in total). As I am writing this thesis, several of Tanya's clothes are waiting in a large basket that I allocated for her commissions until I have enough time to repair or alter them. Among these are several pieces of knitwear that need to be darned after moth damage or a silk dress that is no longer repairable, so Tanya asked me to copy it in a similar fabric. There is also a piece of material that she recently brought from her travels in Georgia, and she would like to have it made into a skirt or a dress.

Just like in the case of Hanka and Julie, my previous relationship with Tanya proved extremely valuable for my research because of the rapport and trust required for this kind of study. In addition, it also enabled me access to a person who would otherwise be highly unlikely to answer requests for participation in similar studies, due to demanding work commitments and preoccupation with own diverse interests. Considering that I aimed to interview women with active lifestyles to learn about their relationship with clothing in their everyday lives, having access to someone with the rich professional experience of Tanya was an invaluable opportunity.

We scheduled our interview to fit in a short gap between Tanya's international journeys. Because early Saturday morning was the only time when we could talk without the interruption of phone calls and urgent e-mails, I arrived a day earlier and stayed overnight at Tanya's place. On the day of the interview we had breakfast together. I used this time to reiterate the purpose of my research and

also to reassure Tanya that the full transcript and all the photos from the interview will be given to her for approval before any dissemination. As a producer of documentaries, Tanya was familiar with this process and she appeared entirely comfortable as I turned the dictaphone on and started taking photos of the items she was taking out of her wardrobe.

Interestingly, in contrast to my experience with my other interviewees, most of my conversation with Tanya took place in her kitchen rather than in front of her wardrobe. This was partly due to low light levels in Tanya's bedroom, which would make it extremely difficult to photograph as well as examine garments in more detail. In addition to this, Tanya is a passionate cook and she strongly feels that the heart of every home is the kitchen. Therefore, when she is not travelling, she prefers to spend most of her time there. *Kitchen is important in this case*, said she, inviting me to help her move all the clothes that she wanted to talk about into her open plan kitchen area: *as that's life - there's no doubt about that*.

TANYA'S WARDROBE(S)

Tanya moved to her current place four years ago from a family home in the same area. Even though the space in this new apartment is relatively generous, the move meant a considerable downsizing from Tanya's previous living arrangements. As a result of new space restrictions, combined with her busy work schedule, some of Tanya's things and family possessions remain in storage. Among these are clothes from her youth connected with fond memories as well as some clothes she no longer wears. Tanya referred to several of these items during our interview.

The rest of Tanya's extensive clothes collection is kept in several built-in wardrobes and chests of drawers around the flat. The storage is loosely divided into clothes Tanya still wears on a more-or-less regular basis – in the built-in wardrobes and a chest of drawers in the bedroom; clothes that she no longer wears – in the built-in wardrobes in the guest bedroom; outerwear – in the wardrobe in the entrance area; and an extra space for accessories in the chest of drawers in the open plan living area.

Mis-matched comfort

As we start talking, Tanya suddenly decides to put on a jumper that I have just repaired for her. She puts it over a top that she likes very much but she also tells me that she finds it difficult to combine with other things. She decided to wear it this morning to ask for my opinion.

Although the patterned top is hardly the best match for the skirt with the large pattern that she is wearing, the repaired jumper seems to tie some of the colours together. Despite this, the whole combination looks slightly eccentric by many people's standards. Undeterred by this, because she suddenly feels cold, Tanya completes the look with her favourite slippers.

As she catches her reflection in a full-length mirror, her new look makes her smile. *The slippers really make the outfit*, she says with a self-assured pleasure. It seems that right now, this bright mismatch combined with her old Slovakian slippers, makes Tanya feel truly comfortable [Figure A.194].



Figure A.194

Hand-me-downs

Tanya is well known among her friends for her love of old clothes and the fact that many of her wardrobe staples go back twenty to twenty-five years. She still also wears several much older items,

some of which used to belong to her mother. But Tanya's habit of wearing clothing that belonged to family does not stop at her mother's clothes.

For example, she regularly wears jeans that her son no longer wanted. Because they are far too long for her, Tanya turns them up several times. She has worn these so often that the denim is now wearing rather thin on the inside of both legs. Therefore, as we talk about these, Tanya asks me to take them with me for repair before the damage gets any worse.

At the time when Tanya's and her daughter's figures were not dissimilar, Tanya also used to wear her daughter's unwanted clothes. For example, in the Prologue to this thesis (p. 13), I mentioned a jacket that was originally her daughter's and that later became such a favourite for Tanya that she would now like to have it copied in another colour.

Quality and craftsmanship

What Tanya values in clothing is quality and authenticity of material, well thought-out design, good cut, and craftsmanship. One of the first things she decides to show me are two kimonos that she bought long time ago in an antique shop in Japan [Figure A.195]. She used to wear these to go out but because her figure has now changed, she no longer likes the way they make her look. To demonstrate, she offers to put one on for me. She briefly observes herself in the mirror and comments with a sigh: *well, I should wear it, but somehow, I'm not in love with purple right now.*

However, what Tanya still likes about both, is the beautiful material and the handmade quality. She also remembers a hand-stitched cord that came with one of them, but, unfortunately, she cannot find it anymore.



Figure A.195

Wear and tear

The fact that Tanya used to wear traditional Japanese kimonos and even had a long ceremonial kimono shortened for her evening wear, confirms that she is quite adventurous in her style. She is also not afraid to combine high-end designer clothing with second-hand and street market finds that she sometimes gets altered. Tanya also proudly wears clothes that have been repeatedly repaired. While unpacking one of her favourite cardigans from a bag that she now uses to protect it during her travels, she tells me [Figures A.196-197]:

You've done this beautifully, so many people have always admired this... I take it with me everywhere, I travel the world with it. That's why it has its own 'piece of luggage' so that it does not get accidentally caught on something. That's why it has its own [bag].



Figure A.196



Figure A.197

Another similar example is Tanya's favourite jumper from the beginnings of the Scottish label Brora, which too was destroyed by moths many years back [Figure A.198]. Tanya did not throw it away because she liked the jumper very much, but she could not really wear it because of the large holes on the cuffs. A while after we first met, she asked me if I would be able to *save it*. I repaired it using a piece of double wool crepe to replace the missing material and since then Tanya has worn it many times again [Figure A.199].



Figure A.198



Figure A.199

However, sometimes repair is no longer possible. One example is the *beautiful* vintage night dress *that is also falling apart now* [Figure A.200]. It has worn so thin in places that there is simply not enough material strong enough to support any repaired parts. Moreover, unlike for example an occasion wear item, a night dress needs to withstand a relatively heavy use. Therefore, it is very likely that the fabric will let go at another place soon after one section has been repaired. Tanya is aware of this and as she examines the torn parts once again, she concludes:

Well, no, there's no point. So, I'll have to wear it like this some time and then say good bye to it. Say good bye.



Figure A.200

Tanya feels sad when some of her well-loved pieces reach a state beyond repair. The number of repairs I have done for her over the years prove that she does not easily part with her clothes. Although she occasionally passes on items that she thinks she will never wear again to her friends, on the whole, she rarely ever disposes of clothing.

Stories of use

Tanya's love of clothes that show a long history of wear is also clear from her description of one of her favourite dresses. The original colour of the dress has faded considerably over the years of wear and washing, she proudly shows me. The passage of time is well visible when the inside of the folds and the pocket are compared with the right side of the dress [Figures A.201-203]:

You know, here you can see that the dress used to be dark blue. And it's not anymore - you must completely open the folds, or you can see it on the inside of the pocket a bit - that it used to be - Here it shows! So, look at the difference - what it used to look like originally.



Figure A.201



Figure A.202



Figure A.203

One of the reasons why Tanya relies on this dress [Figure A.204] so much is that it barely creases and so it can be worn straight away when she takes it out of her suitcase. She tells me she has countless photos from all around the world in which she wears this dress at *very IMPORTANT places*. As an example, she says she wore it when she was awarded a medal in the US.



Figure A.204

What is also interesting is that at the same time when Tanya bought this dress, she bought another one of the same style in brown velvet. However, it turns out that she has never worn the velvet version which is now kept in the storage. When I ask her why she thinks she has not worn the other dress, she is finding it difficult to pin the reasons down. *I don't know, somehow, I couldn't wear that one quite in the same way as this*, she says with hesitation.

Travel wardrobe

The fact that her nomadic lifestyle strongly underpins Tanya's decisions on clothing comes through very clearly in her comment on another dress that now also shows obvious signs of wear and tear. *This is now completely transparent*, she says, *as it's another thing that one can throw in the suitcase - throw in the suitcase principle is very important* [Figure A.205].

The hand-shortened straps she points out to me are another testimony to Tanya's active approach to her wardrobe [Figure A.206]. When she first bought the dress, the straps made it far too long for her figure. Tanya therefore decided to shorten them quickly and wear the dress much higher up than it was originally designed for. By her own admission, her sewing skills are not great, but this DIY solution seemed to have served its purpose. Thanks to the shortened straps, Tanya has now been wearing this dress for over fifteen years.



Figure A.205



Figure A.206

Apart from the non-crease material, another advantage of this dress is the colour. Tanya finds that *you can wear one red over another* which makes the dress easy to combine with many other red items she owns.

Tanya's first reaction to a skirt I pick up from her ample collection of second-hand skirts that she proudly carries to show me [Figures A.207-208], is just another proof that many of her favourite

pieces are appreciated specifically for their suitability for Tanya's nomadic lifestyle. *This one is great as it doesn't weigh anything*, says she with a certainty of an expert on travel wardrobe [Figure A.209].



Figure A.207



Figure A.208



Figure A.209

Clothes shopping

Despite her obvious passion for interesting pieces and the extensive number of clothes that she has accumulated during her lifetime, Tanya is adamant that she is not interested in clothes shopping per se. This especially applies to shopping for new, as opposed to second-hand, clothes. If something catches her eye during her travels or on her random visits to second-hand and charity shops, Tanya will find that exciting and will gladly buy the piece: *I see it and then I want it*, she says. However, reminiscing about the one occasion when she had to go out shopping and buy an entirely new outfit as a part of a deal with her friends who organized her fiftieth birthday party, she tells me this was *a true SUFFERING*.

Because I would have bought something new in a second-hand shop, well, new for me, anyway. But I didn't see anything, anywhere, I couldn't find anything ANYWHERE at all. Nothing that I would think: this I must have for my fiftieth birthday, you know?

In the end, Tanya's search for a dress for her fiftieth birthday resulted in a last-minute purchase of a paper dress that she spotted in a shop window.

I saw that paper dress and I decided as we were passing by in the car that this was THE dress, I wanted for my fiftieth birthday.

Tanya has fond memories of this unconventional decision because she ended up standing on a table at her birthday party while everyone present signed the dress with coloured markers. Some weeks after the party Tanya then also bought a fabric version of the same dress [Figures A.210-211]. The shop assistants kindly put it aside for her during the sales because they liked her birthday story. This dress has since become one of the staples in Tanya's wardrobe.

This dress, the green one, it's now been nineteen years. I've had this dress for nineteen years - I've worn it for nineteen years. And it's still simply perfect. But nineteen years ago, this dress cost something like, I don't know - one thousand pounds, you know? And I got it, I bought it for two hundred or something like that, you know, when they put it aside for me.



Figure A.210



Figure A.211

Some years later, while she was travelling in Thailand, Tanya had the green original copied in a slightly different, red material [Figure A.212]. At the same time, she also commissioned her own variation on the style, a stripy silk dress with an asymmetric bias cut skirt [Figures A.213-214].



Figure A.212

Both the green original and the red copy of the dress travel very well so Tanya often takes them with her to wear for special occasions. However, the third, stripy version, was not made very well and so for many years Tanya was not able to wear it. The fabric for the bias panel was not cut out and inserted correctly and so the skirt looked mis-balanced, with too much material on one side and a considerable puckering along the seams. After we met, Tanya asked me to try and correct this. Since I made all the possible corrections, she has worn it several times.



Figure A.213



Figure A.214

Childhood memories

As we speak, Tanya also remembers about several garments from her youth and childhood that she used to love. She still has some of these clothes, but they are now kept in the storage.

The first one is a dress that Tanya's mother had made for her from a thick vintage hessian, which, Tanya remembers, came with several stains. The style was quite simple, and the hessian was combined with a traditional Slovakian embroidery panel. Tanya received the dress in one of the weekly parcels that her mother was allowed to send to her from Slovakia while Tanya was a student.

And I toured all around Hong-Kong in the dress. Here, it had two spaghetti straps [showing on her shoulders] and I toured all around China in it. That was my beloved dress. I loved it.

Tanya also has strong memories of her prom dress that was also custom-made for her by her mother's friend. It was made from a three-metre piece of hand-woven white cotton that Tanya's mother had received as a gift from Indonesia.

It was quite a bold dress, that was sleeveless, A-style, with quite a low-cut neckline and I had a kind of collar here [showing around the neck – Figure A.215] that ended with a big white 'bow-tie' at the back [smiles]. That was my prom dress, absolutely beautiful. And I brought it to England and it's still in a box somewhere, but it surely has yellowed by now. It would never fit me now, but the best thing was that, I don't think there are any photographs from the prom, but I DANCED through my first night IN THIS DRESS [smiles].

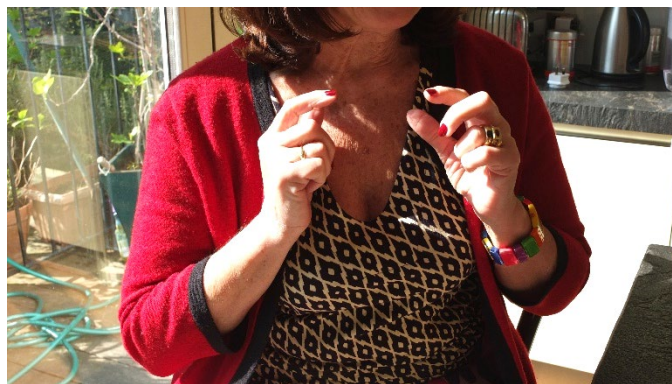


Figure A.215

Another dress she remembers was a light blue dress that she says she *hated* because of the colour, but her mother believed that her skin tone was far too dark for Tanya to wear bright colours.

The reason why I love red, she explains, is that my mother wouldn't allow me to wear it, so when I first arrived in England, I switched to wearing only red and black [laughs], no pastel colours at all.

Quite a few of the garments she shows me are indeed a clear proof that Tanya is not afraid of bold colours or patterns. Red and yellow are her favourite colours and she enjoys wearing distinctive clothes that set her apart from the crowd: *I never wanted to wear what everyone else was wearing.*

However, it is only after our conversation progresses further and develops into a mutual exchange of early memories related to clothes, that the true significance of Tanya's love for bright colours and unique styles surfaces. As Tanya shares the following stories with me, it suddenly becomes clear that there is much more to this than just personal aesthetic preference.

Wardrobe stories

I have one more story that relates to clothing, but it is very political, Tanya suddenly tells me. Several longer pauses and a slight detour follow, which suggests that this is still an uneasy memory for Tanya. She then tells me a story of a yellow pinafore with two large gold buttons that her mother had made for her when Tanya was about ten.

Although this is quite sensitive, Tanya kindly gave me her permission to use this story in my thesis if I chose to. Despite this, I still long contemplated whether including this experience was the right thing to do, because of the personal responsibility I feel toward Tanya as both my friend and my interviewee. In the end, because Tanya's story reveals some critical clues about the significance of childhood memories for our future decisions about the clothes we wear, I decided for inclusion.

Tanya grew up in the communist Czechoslovakia. When she was about two years old, her father was taken political prisoner and spent nine years away from his wife and daughter. Naturally, these were extremely difficult circumstances for both Tanya and her mother, particularly after Tanya started school and was confronted with the fact that within the pro-regime education system, she would

always be seen as a child of a man who dared to oppose it. This culminated in an incident that involved her new yellow pinafore dress.

Apparently, the Principal of Tanya's school found the colour of the dress so unusual in comparison to the much more sober colour palette available at shops at the time, that she used the regular morning gathering of the whole school to shame Tanya for wearing what she called the *capitalist colours*. This incident had such a significant impact on Tanya, that from that point on she insisted on wearing only track suit bottoms and a T-shirt for the rest of her school education. She explains:

I think that one of the reasons why I have such a curious relationship with clothes is that she, well, traumatized me - I don't know how else to call it (...) I think that my love of wearing absolutely anything in quite an eccentric way stems from the fact that I spent ten years as a child of "an enemy of the country". That I always was that...and that's how, eventually, I perhaps learned to get on with these things in a very comfortable way.

As Tanya herself confirms, despite this difficult experience, or perhaps because of it, she now truly enjoys wearing interesting, unusual clothes. Whereas many of her friends, especially those in her age group, now generally opt for more conservative clothing in subtle muted colours, Tanya seems to derive a lot of pleasure from bold distinctive pieces. Her wardrobe is therefore a rare fusion of relatively expensive items from high end designers with often inexpensive finds from her travels. Tanya appreciates quality and craftsmanship and she is prepared to pay adequately for both. However, like most women, she also loves a bargain.

Collecting memories

With her lifelong experience of buying clothes in street markets and charity shops, Tanya says that thirty pounds is normally the top end of what she is prepared to pay for a second-hand piece of clothing. There is, however, one exception – her silk jacket with a cherry pattern [Figures A.216-217]. Tanya says she bought this in a charity shop for a price that was well over her usual charity shop maximum. *I couldn't resist this, she says, while the cut isn't good at all, it was just because of the cherries.*

To clarify, she tells me about a bib dress with a circular skirt and straps that crossed over at the back that she had as a little girl. She remembers that her father brought this dress for her from Budapest shortly before he went to prison, so she must have been about two at the time. She recalls that her mother kept this dress for years afterwards, probably as a reminder of the times when *she still had a family, and everything was all right. I don't remember the dress, but I remember the FEELING*, Tanya tells me. As it soon turns out, this bib dress had a cherry pattern on it.



Figure A.216



Figure A.217



Figure A.218

As we dig in deeper into Tanya's wardrobe, we find a substantial number of other clothes accumulated through her lifetime, that like her charity shop jacket have a cherry pattern on them. One of the first skirts in her charity shop skirts collections, she points out to me, is just one example of many [Figure A.218]. All these clothes therefore seem to be much more than just something else to wear for Tanya. They seem to be a tangible testimony to a feeling, an experience of wearing a piece of clothing, that is as strong now as it was nearly seventy years ago now.

B. THEME TABLES

Sensory Experiences

Enablers

Longing and Belonging

Layering

SENSORY EXPERIENCES
COMFORT*¹ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. DIS-COMFORT b. KNITWEAR c. REVEALING d. SIMPLE e. SOFT f. SOFTENING THROUGH WEAR
MATERIALS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. CASHMERE b. COTTON c. ELASTIC d. LINEN e. SILK f. SYNTHETICS g. WOOL
SHAPE/STYLE*²
FIT*³ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. TOO BIG b. TOO TIGHT
DETAILS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. ELASTIC/DRAWSTRING b. BUTTONS c. COLLAR/NECKLINE d. DROPPED YOKE e. LINING f. POCKETS g. SLEEVES h. SLIT i. ZIP

¹ See also Longing and belonging

² See also Longing and belonging

³ See also Longing and belonging

<p>COLOURS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. BRIGHT b. MATCHING c. MUTED
<p>PATTERNS AND PRINTS</p>
<p>ASSOCIATIONS*⁴</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. FEEL b. HOLIDAY CLOTHES c. INVISIBLE GARMENTS d. SOUVENIRS

⁴ See also Longing and belonging

ENABLERS
<p>APPROPRIATENESS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. CLIMATE b. CONFIDENCE c. EVERYDAY CLOTHES d. EARLY MOTHERHOOD e. MATERNITY WEAR f. OCCASION WEAR g. OCCASIONS FOR WEAR h. PROFESSIONAL SELF-PRESENTATION i. SPORTSWEAR j. SUITS ME/FLATTERING k. SEASONAL CLOTHES l. TRAVEL m. WORK OUTFITS n. WORK/WEEKEND WARDROBE o. IT WORKS
<p>VERSATILITY</p>
<p>UTILITY/PRACTICALITY</p>
<p>COMBINATIONS</p>
<p>CARE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. IRONING b. ISSUES c. MOTHS d. WASHING
<p>SATISFACTION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. FAVOURITE CLOTHES b. HATED CLOTHES c. LONGEVITY d. MULTIPLE EXAMPLES OF THE SAME e. OFTEN WORN f. QUALITY g. RARELY WORN

h. RE-INCARNATIONS/REPLICAS
COMFORT*⁵ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. DIS-COMFORT b. KNITWEAR c. REVEALING d. SIMPLE e. SOFT f. SOFTENING THROUGH WEAR
FIT*⁶ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. TOO BIG b. TOO TIGHT
SECOND THOUGHTS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. SHOPPING MISTAKES b. UNCERTAINTY/DOUBTS
SHAPE/STYLE*⁷

⁵ See also Sensory experiences

⁶ See also Sensory experiences

⁷ See also Sensory experiences

LONGING AND BELONGING
<p>CONNECTIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. CHILDHOOD MEMORIES b. COMMENTS c. FAMILY INFLUENCES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. FATHER ii. GRANDMOTHER iii. MOTHER iv. SISTER d. FRIENDS e. CLOTHES FROM OTHER PEOPLE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. FRIENDS ii. GRANDMOTHER iii. MOTHER iv. MOTHER IN LAW f. GIFTS g. JUSTIFY h. MEMORIES OF WEAR
<p>WARDROBE PATTERNS/HABITS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. DIFFERENT b. SAME
<p>WARDROBE STORIES*⁸</p>
<p>CLOTHES SHOPPING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. BRANDS b. CHALLENGES/ISSUES c. CHARITY SHOPS d. E-BAY e. ETHICAL PARADOXES f. FRIENDS g. MEMORIES h. ON-LINE SHOPPING i. PROVENANCE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. CUSTOM-MADE CLOTHES ii. HOME-MADE CLOTHES/SEWING

⁸ See also Layering

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> iii. MASS PRODUCTION iv. SMALL PRODUCTION j. SALES/BARGAINS k. SWAPPING l. TREATS
<p>INSPIRATIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. IDEALS/WISHLIST b. FASHION c. FASHION MAGAZINES d. INSTAGRAM/BLOGS e. SARTORIAL/STREET WEAR
<p>SECOND-HAND CLOTHES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. CHANGES OVER TIME b. ISSUES
<p>PRICE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. AFFORDABLE b. GOOD VALUE/COST PER WEAR c. HIGH/EXPENSIVE d. LOW/INEXPENSIVE
<p>ASSOCIATIONS*⁹</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. FEEL b. HOLIDAY CLOTHES c. INVISIBLE GARMENTS d. SOUVENIRS

⁹ See also Sensory experiences

LAYERING
AGE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. BODY IMAGE b. WARDROBE QUANTITIES
LENGTH OF OWNERSHIP <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. NEW CLOTHES b. OLD CLOTHES c. STUDENT CLOTHES
LETTING GO <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. GETTING RID OF THINGS b. GIVING TO CHARITY c. KEEPING CLOTHES/HANGING ON TO THINGS d. MOVING ON
SPACE/STORAGE ISSUES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. CLOTHES STORED AWAY b. MOVING c. QUANTITY
TIME <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. CHANGING PATTERNS OF WEAR b. CHANGING PREFERENCES c. FIGURE CHANGES d. FUTURE POSSIBILITIES
WARDROBE STORIES*¹⁰
WEAR&TEAR <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. FALLING APART/FALLING TO BITS b. REPAIRABILITY c. REPAIRS/ALTERATIONS

¹⁰ See also Longing and belonging

C. INTERVIEW SCHEDULES

Interview schedule per participant

Interview schedule per garment

C.1 Interview schedule per participant

1. Can you show me the newest piece of clothing in your wardrobe?
 - [Follow sheet 1]
2. Can you show me some of the oldest pieces in your wardrobe?
 - [Follow sheet 1]
3. Do you own any handmade pieces of clothing?
 - Yes: Can you tell me more about it?
 - Who made it?
 - How long have you had it?
 - [Follow sheet 1 as appropriate]
 - Would you like to own more handmade clothes?
 - No: Have you owned any handmade clothes in the past?
 - Would you like to own some handmade clothes?
4. Do you repair/have your clothes repaired?
 - Can you please tell me more about it?
5. How do you choose new clothes?
 - Do you have a favourite shop/brand?
 - Do you shop on your own or do you prefer shopping with your friend(s)/partner/family member?
 - Do you buy clothes on-line?
6. Do you ever buy second-hand clothes?
 - Yes: Can you tell me more about your experiences with second-hand clothing?
 - No: Why not? Can you explain?
7. Do you own any clothes that used to belong to a member of your family or your friends?
 - Yes: [Follow sheet 1 as appropriate]
 - If you no longer wear them, why do you keep them?
 - No: Have you had any in the past?
 - Can you tell me what you remember about them?
8. Is there a piece of clothing that you dream about but don't have?/ Was there in the past?
Could you describe it?

9. When you no longer wear a piece of clothing, what do you do with it?
10. Is there anything you would like to add? [Possibly offer the option to use the Graffiti Wall method to record ideas remembered after the interview.]

Optional: Your ideal/dream piece of clothing?

C.2 Interview schedule per garment

GARMENT	PHOTO	ACQUIRED HOW + ANY DETAILS REMEMBERED	ACQUIRED WHY? – WHAT MADE YOU BUY IT?
OWNED FOR HOW LONG NOW	FREQUENCY OF WEAR	FAVOURITE FEATURES	LEAST FAVOURITE FEATURES
AGE OF THE GARMENT		HOW/WHEN DO YOU LIKE WEARING IT MOST?	

WASHING AND IRONING	WOULD YOU REPLACE/REPAIR WHEN WORN OUT?	PHOTOS OF DETAILS – as appropriate per conversation	OTHER COMMENTS – is there anything you would like to add?
<p>QUESTIONS INSPIRED BY THE CONVERSATION</p> <p>e.g. Do you have a photo of yourself wearing this?</p>			

D. INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT EXAMPLES

Louise (lines 273 – 328)

Mary (lines 1400 – 1453)

D.1 LOUISE (LINES 273 - 328)

A: tararam!...sooo...yeah...this one was a treat...so...I was with a friend in hmmm....what is it called that...House of Frasers...where I never go...because it's just...too expensive...and they had some sales on...and I LOVE yellow! - it's my favourite colour (laugh)...

Q: yeah

A: (still laughing)...and I don't know - I spotted that one and...it looked...you know...like good quality for once...because you know - at least it will last longer and hmmm...I don't know - I like the colour...and since then...I wear it all the time...

Q: yeah

A: and it's still not broken anywhere...so...that's good (smile)

Q: yeah - it's really nice

A: yeah - I LOVE IT! - I love it...obviously - it needs ironing - but - you know...that's

Q: yeah...so do you know how long ago that would have been?

A: aaah...probably a good five years ago...yeah...and I wear it a lot! (laugh)

Q: yeah, it's really pretty - I can just see you wearing it

A: it's cute!...yeah!...and it's just so nice...and soft you know...and...I like the design - so - yeah - that's probably my favourite clothes...but I'm trying not to wear it too often (laugh)...because sometimes when I go through my pictures...you know...and I'm like - and with my sister the other day - oh! you've got that top again (laugh)...but - I was like - oh! that's true - you know - when I travel - I usually wear that top (laugh)...I'm a bit boring but - you know

Q: yeah yeah

A: so yeah - THAT one is one of my favourites...and then...(made an undecisive sound)...no...not really - I mean - (looking through the wardrobe) I've got a few like...that's from my mother in law as well...okay - THAT I never wear...

Q: oooh

A: it's just - again - it's not me...you know it's a bit like - uuuuh (making faces)...(laugh)...I don't like it - you know...it's just material...I just...

Q: is it leather?...

A: NO - I don't think [can't get this bit - she'd give me leather]...

Q: or is it leatherette?

A: I think it's a fake...it's Promod...you know Promod?

Q: oh yeah - yeah...

A: yeah...so it's quite - you know...but it's still...no - I don't think it's leather...

Q: yeah...but you can see...hmmm...that there's some kind of French aesthetics to it...that can -
I can quite imagine a French woman really getting away with it very well

A: yeah!...I mean what I LIKE...in a way...you don't find here very often - that it's simple - so it's
straight - you know...so I like straight skirts...I don't like when they go like (showing + making a
sound [15:58])...you know so that's hard to find nowadays...so I suppose...it's got THAT quality
- but it's just - you know the material...

Q: hmmm

A: that I'm not comfortable in it...but I DO wear it sometimes...if I'm in the mood

Q: outside?

A: yeah [16:10]... oh yeah...(smile)

Q: ohhhh (laugh)

A: yeah - and the one I wear all the time - she also gave me that...in a way it's good - you know
- she finds treasures for me - but...

Q: oh, that looks very nice!

A: that's NAF NAF...you know NAF NAF?

Q: yeah

A: and that I wear ALL the time as well

Q: I had a few things from NAF NAF

A: yeah - it's nice - because...it's simple!

Q: yeah

A: straight, simple - so yeah...that's what you want...so THAT I wear a lot - and she gave me
that...[can't get this bit]...and I've lost a button here...brilliant...it's probably here somewhere...

Q: can I take a photo of the lost button thing? - that's interesting - you know...

A: I would still wear it - I don't care...(laugh)...but it's...

D.2 MARY (LINES 1400 – 1453)

A: hmmm...it looks like some kind of - it's a bit creased because it's...been in the freezer...and...so that's the one that...I combine with...hmmm...where's it gone - where's it gone - where's it gone (whispering)...(looking for it)...so that - that just kind of works...and that pink belt

Q: hmmm

A: it all - kind of...goes together...hmmm...then...that - so this - this was kind of - like an almost mistake...I bought this in February - it was really cold and miserable...it was my birthday...and...and it just - the colour...just...sang of...summer time...so

Q: (laugh)

A: of the cardigans that I've got there...quite a few of them go with several different things...but because that's such...a bright colour...I struggle to...pull it off

Q: hmmm

A: but it does...kind of work with that - so...

Q: yeah - it does - definitely...yeah - it looks great

A: so I hang onto it

Q: and also the buttons look really good

A: yeah...hmmm...okay...and that's just - it's not very exciting but it's...just a nice colour

Q: hmmm hmmm

A: and it - I've got some polka dot shorts it works with...this is a...hmmm...wrap around...so I wanted a wraparound...from them...for ages

Q: hmmm

A: but you know when you don't - never see one that's quite the right colour

Q: yeah

A: hmmm...so...this looks really fabulous with jeans...hmmm...it's such a gorgeous colour

Q: yeah

A: I'm in love with that colour...hmmm...and...oh yes! and...it kind of...works with that

Q: yeah

A: so that's - that's quite good fun

Q: so do you have to think of defrosting your jumpers...in the evening - to wear them in the morning (laugh)?

A: no...so what I've just dragged out is all the stuff that I'd wear in...summer time

Q: oh - okay - so those are summer jumpers for...yeah

A: yeah - so I've only - only just started this freezing thing - since I had a couple of nibbles...

Q: hmmm hmmm

A: early this year...I think that's what I'm gonna do - certainly with things that are definitely summer or...winter...try to protect it that way

Q: hmmm

A: but - you know - on the subject - so Alex just - when I went downstairs he teased me and said...does Mila think you've got too many clothes or something?

Q: (laugh)

A: hmmm

Q: and the question really was: he thinks you have too many clothes?

A: hmmm...but in a sense...I kind of do...because...there comes a point where you're having to look...after all this stuff...you're having to keep it all clean, mended

Q: hmmm hmmm

A: and...safe from moths...so I'm probably - I am at that point where...I need to...stop - getting things - or - get rid of things

Q: hmmm hmmm

A: I would say...so...

Q: and which one you fear most - or more? getting rid of things or stopping getting things?

A: hmmm...there ARE a few things I'd get rid off...hmmm...I think just slowing down and only getting things if they're really amazing

Q: hmmm - but you seem to be getting quite amazing things...so...or don't you think so?

A: yeah...hmmm...some of it is about...not - not getting too many fancy things that you don't...end up wearing...so it's stuff that you really do wear

E. CODE BOOK EXAMPLES

Code books 5&6 (of 7)

Final code book

Themes and categories 2 (of 3)

Categories and codes – CODEBOOK 5 (of 7)	Notes - THEMES
1. AGE a. BODY IMAGE b. WARDROBE QUANTITIES	TIME
2. APPROPRIATENESS a. CLIMATE b. CONFIDENCE c. EVERYDAY CLOTHES d. KIDS vs CLOTHES e. MATERNITY WEAR f. NEVER WORN? (see also SATISFACTION) g. OCCASION WEAR h. OCCASIONS (FOR WEAR) i. PROFESSIONAL SELF-PRESENTATION j. SPORTSWEAR k. SUITS ME/FLATTERING l. SUMMER-WINTER CLOTHES/SEASONAL CLOTHES m. TRAVEL n. WORK CLOTHES/OUTFITS o. WORK/WEEKEND WARDROBE p. WORKS	ENABLERS
3. ASSOCIATIONS a. FEEL b. HOLIDAY CLOTHES c. INVISIBLE GARMENTS d. SOUVENIRS	LONGING AND BELONGING SENSORY EXPERIENCES
4. CONNECTIONS a. CHILDHOOD MEMORIES b. COMMENTS c. FAMILY i. GRANDMOTHER ii. MOTHER d. FRIENDS e. FROM OTHER PEOPLE i. FRIENDS ii. GRANDMOTHER iii. MOTHER iv. MOTHER IN LAW f. GIFTS g. JUSTIFY h. MEMORIES OF WEAR	LONGING AND BELONGING
5. CARE a. IRONING	ENABLERS

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> b. ISSUES c. MOTHS d. WASHING 	
6. CLOTHES SHOPPING <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. BRANDS b. CHALLENGES/ISSUES c. CHARITY SHOPS d. E-BAY e. ETHICS/PARADOXES f. FRIENDS g. MEMORIES h. ON-LINE SHOPPING i. PROVENANCE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. CUSTOM-MADE CLOTHES ii. HOME-MADE CLOTHES/SEWING iii. MASS PRODUCTION iv. SMALL PRODUCTION j. SALES/BARGAINS k. SWAPPING l. TREATS 	LONGING AND BELONGING
7. COLOURS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. BRIGHT b. MATCHING c. MUTED 	SENSORY EXPERIENCES
8. COMBINATIONS	WARDROBE IN CONTEXT ENABLERS
9. COMFORT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. DIS-COMFORT b. KNITWEAR c. REVEALING d. SIMPLE e. SOFT f. SOFTENING THROUGH WEAR 	SENSORY EXPERIENCES
10. DETAILS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. ADAPTABILITY/ELASTIC/DRAWSTRING b. BUTTONS c. COLLAR/NECKLINE d. DROPPED YOKE e. LINING f. POCKETS g. SLEEVES h. SLIT i. ZIP 	SENSORY EXPERIENCES
11. FIT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. TOO BIG b. TOO TIGHT 	SENSORY EXPERIENCES ENABLERS
12. INSPIRATIONS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. DESIGN IDEAS 	LONGING AND BELONGING

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> b. FASHION c. FASHION MAGAZINES d. INFLUENCES e. INSTAGRAM/BLOGS f. SARTORIAL 	
13. LENGTH OF OWNERSHIP <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. NEW CLOTHES b. OLD CLOTHES c. STUDENT CLOTHES 	TIME
14. MATERIALS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. CASHMERE b. COTTON c. ELASTIC d. LINEN e. SILK f. SYNTHETICS g. WOOL 	SENSORY EXPERIENCES
15. PARTING WITH THINGS/LETTING GO <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. GETTING RID OF THINGS b. GIVING TO CHARITY c. KEEPING CLOTHES/HANGING ONTO THINGS d. MOVING ON 	TIME
16. PATTERNS AND PRINTS	SENSORY EXPERIENCES
17. PRICE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. BARGAIN AFFORDABLE b. GOOD VALUE/COST PER WEAR c. HIGH/EXPENSIVE d. LOW/INEXPENSIVE 	ENABLERS
18. SATISFACTION <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. FAVOURITE CLOTHES b. HATED CLOTHES c. LONGEVITY d. MULTIPLE EXAMPLES OF THE SAME e. NEVER WORN? (see also APPROPRIATENESS) f. OFTEN WORN g. QUALITY h. RARELY WORN i. RE-INCARNATIONS/REPLICAS 	ENABLERS LONGING AND BELONGING
19. SECOND THOUGHTS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. SHOPPING MISTAKES b. UNCERTAINTY/DOUBTS 	ENABLERS LONGING AND BELONGING
20. SECOND-HAND CLOTHES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. CHANGES OVER TIME b. ISSUES 	LONGING AND BELONGING
21. SHAPE/STYLE	SENSORY EXPERIENCES ENABLERS

22. SPACE/STORAGE ISSUES a. CLOTHES STORED AWAY b. MOVING c. QUANTITY	ENABLERS
23. TIME a. CHANGING PATTERNS OF WEAR b. CHANGING PREFERENCES c. FIGURE CHANGES d. FUTURE POSSIBILITIES	TIME
24. UTILITY/PRACTICALITY	ENABLERS
25. VERSATILITY	ENABLERS WARDROBE IN CONTEXT
26. WARDROBE PATTERNS/PATTERNS OF WEAR/WARDROBE HABITS a. DIFFERENT b. SAME	LONGING AND BELONGING
27. WARDROBE STORIES	LONGING AND BELONGING
28. WEAR&TEAR a. FALLING APART/FALLING TO BITS b. REPAIRABILITY c. REPAIRS/ALTERATIONS	TIME

Categories and codes – CODEBOOK 6 (of 7)	Notes Definitions from: Oxford Learner's Dictionary of Academic English. Oxford: OUP, 2014	THEMES
1. AGE a. BODY IMAGE b. WARDROBE QUANTITIES/ QUANTITY	AGE = the number of years that a person has lived, or a thing has existed	TIME = a period of time, either long or short, during which sth happens or when sb does sth
2. APPROPRIATENESS a. CLIMATE b. CONFIDENCE c. EVERYDAY CLOTHES d. KIDS vs CLOTHES/ CHILDREN? / <u>EARLY MOTHERHOOD</u> e. MATERNITY WEAR f. OCCASION WEAR g. OCCASIONS FOR WEAR h. PROFESSIONAL SELF-PRESENTATION i. SPORTSWEAR j. SUITS ME/FLATTERING k. SEASONAL CLOTHES l. TRAVEL m. WORK OUTFITS n. WORK/WEEKEND WARDROBE o. IT WORKS	APPROPRIATENESS = the degree to which sth is suitable, acceptable or correct for the particular circumstances	ENABLERS – ENABLE = 1. to make it possible for sb to do sth; 2. to make it possible for sth to happen or exist by creating the necessary conditions

3. ASSOCIATIONS

- a. FEEL
- b. HOLIDAY CLOTHES
- c. INVISIBLE GARMENTS
- d. SOUVENIRS

ASSOCIATION = an idea or a memory that is suggested by sb/sth; a mental connection between ideas

LONGING AND BELONGING – LONG = missing from dictionary in this sense; BELONG = 1. to be in the right or suitable place; 2. to be connected with or come from sth; 3. to feel comfortable and happy in a particular situation or with a particular group of people

SENSORY EXPERIENCES

SENSE = A - 2. a feeling about sth important; 4. one of the five powers (sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch) that your body uses to get information about the world around you; B – 1. to become aware of sth even though you cannot clearly see it, hear it, etc.; 2. to become aware of sth by seeing it, hearing it, etc.; 3. to discover and record or react to sth;

SENSORY = connected with the physical senses;

		<p>EXPERIENCE = A - 1. the knowledge and skill that you have gained through doing sth for a period of time; the process of gaining this; 2. the things that have happened to you that affect the way you think and behave; 3. an event or activity that affects you in some way; B = 1. to have a particular situation affect you or happen to you; 2. to have a particular emotion or physical feeling</p>
<p>4. CONNECTIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. CHILDHOOD MEMORIES b. COMMENTS c. FAMILY/<u>STYLE ARCHETYPES?</u>/FAMILY <u>INFLUENCES (move here from INSPIRATIONS?)</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. FATHER ii. GRANDMOTHER iii. MOTHER iv. SISTER d. FRIENDS e. FROM OTHER PEOPLE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. FRIENDS ii. GRANDMOTHER iii. MOTHER 	<p>CONNECTION = 1. something that connects two facts or ideas; 2. relationship between people or groups of people, often for a particular purpose</p>	<p>LONGING AND BELONGING</p>

iv. MOTHER IN LAW f. GIFTS g. JUSTIFY h. MEMORIES OF WEAR		
5. CARE a. IRONING b. ISSUES c. MOTHS d. WASHING	CARE = attention or thought that you give to sth that you are doing so that you will do it well and avoid mistakes or damage ISSUE = an important topic that people are discussing or arguing about	ENABLERS
6. CLOTHES SHOPPING a. BRANDS b. CHALLENGES/ ISSUES / <u>ISSUES</u> c. CHARITY SHOPS d. E-BAY e. ETHICS/PARADOXES/ ETHICAL PARADOXES f. FRIENDS g. MEMORIES h. ON-LINE SHOPPING i. PROVENANCE i. CUSTOM-MADE CLOTHES ii. HOME-MADE CLOTHES/SEWING iii. MASS PRODUCTION	CLOTHES = the things that you wear SHOPPING = the activity of buying things from shops or the Internet	LONGING AND BELONGING

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> iv. SMALL PRODUCTION j. SALES/BARGAINS k. SWAPPING l. TREATS 	<p>CHALLENGE = a new or difficult task or situation that tests sb's ability and skill</p> <p>ISSUE = an important topic that people are discussing or arguing about</p> <p>ETHICAL = connected with beliefs and principles about what is right and wrong</p> <p>PARADOX = 1. a thing, situation or person that has two opposite features and therefore seems strange; 2. a statement containing two opposite ideas that make it seem impossible or</p>	
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	not likely, although it is probably true; the use of this in writing	
7. COLOURS a. BRIGHT b. MATCHING c. MUTED	COLOUR = the appearance that things have that results from the way in which they reflect light	SENSORY EXPERIENCES
8. COMBINATIONS	COMBINATION = two or more things joined or mixed together to form a single unit	WARDROBE IN CONTEXT WARDROBE = missing from dictionary CONTEXT = the situation or set of circumstances in which sth happens and that helps you to understand it ENABLERS
9. COMFORT a. DIS-COMFORT b. KNITWEAR c. REVEALING d. SIMPLE e. SOFT f. SOFTENING THROUGH WEAR	COMFORT = 1. the state of being physically relaxed and free from pain; 2. the state of having a pleasant life, with everything that you need; 3. a feeling of not	SENSORY EXPERIENCES

	<p>suffering or worrying so much;</p> <p>a feeling of being less unhappy;</p> <p>4. a person or thing that helps you when you are suffering, worried or unhappy; 5. a thing that makes your life easier or more comfortable</p>	
<p>10. DETAILS</p> <p>a. ADAPTABILITY/ELASTIC/DRAWSTRING</p> <p>b. BUTTONS</p> <p>c. COLLAR/NECKLINE</p> <p>d. DROPPED YOKE</p> <p>e. LINING</p> <p>f. POCKETS</p> <p>g. SLEEVES</p> <p>h. SLIT</p> <p>i. ZIP</p>	<p>DETAIL = a small part of something that can be looked at; one or more of these taken together</p>	<p>DETAILS</p> <p>DETAIL = a small part of something that can be looked at; one or more of these taken together</p> <p>SENSORY EXPERIENCES</p>
<p>11. FIT</p> <p>a. TOO BIG</p> <p>b. TOO TIGHT</p>	<p>FIT = 1. to be of the right size or shape for sb/sth, or to go somewhere; 5. to make sb/sth suitable for a particular job</p>	<p>SENSORY EXPERIENCES</p> <p>ENABLERS</p>

<p>12. INSPIRATIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. DESIGN IDEAS/IDEALS/WISHLIST b. FASHION c. FASHION MAGAZINES d. INFLUENCES this moved up to CONNECTIONS e. INSTAGRAM/BLOGS f. SARTORIAL/STREET WEAR 	<p>INSPIRATION = 1. the experience of being made to feel confident and excited about doing sth; 2. a person or thing that makes you feel confident and excited about doing sth; 3. the idea of doing sth or the reason for doing sth; the person or thing that provides this</p> <p>IDEAL = 1. perfect; most suitable; 2. the best that can be imagined, but not likely to become real</p>	<p>LONGING AND BELONGING</p>
<p>13. LENGTH OF OWNERSHIP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. NEW CLOTHES b. OLD CLOTHES c. STUDENT CLOTHES 	<p>OWNERSHIP = the fact of owning something</p>	<p>TIME</p>
<p>14. MATERIALS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. CASHMERE b. COTTON c. ELASTIC 	<p>MATERIAL = 1. a substance from which a thing is or can be made;</p>	<p>SENSORY EXPERIENCES</p>

d. LINEN e. SILK f. SYNTHETICS g. WOOL	a substance with a particular quality; 4. cloth used for making clothes	
15. LETTING GO a. GETTING RID OF THINGS b. GIVING TO CHARITY c. KEEPING CLOTHES/HANGING ONTO THINGS d. MOVING ON	LET GO = to give up an idea or an attitude; to give up control of sth	TIME
16. PATTERNS AND PRINTS	PATTERN = a regular arrangement of lines, shapes, colours, etc. found in similar objects or as a design material	SENSORY EXPERIENCES
17. PRICE a. AFFORDABLE b. GOOD VALUE/COST PER WEAR c. HIGH/EXPENSIVE d. LOW/INEXPENSIVE	PRICE = the amount of money that you have to pay for something AFFORD = to have enough money or time to be able to buy or to do something	ENABLERS

18. SATISFACTION a. FAVOURITE CLOTHES b. HATED CLOTHES c. LONGEVITY d. MULTIPLE EXAMPLES OF THE SAME e. OFTEN WORN f. QUALITY g. RARELY WORN h. RE-INCARNATIONS/REPLICAS	SATISFACTION = 1. the good feeling that you have when you have achieved sth or when sth that you wanted to happen does happen; something that gives you this feeling; 2. the act of satisfying a need or desire	ENABLERS LONGING AND BELONGING
19. SECOND THOUGHTS a. SHOPPIING MISTAKES b. UNCERTAINTY/DOUBTS	(to have) SECOND THOUGHTS = to change your opinion after thinking about sth again	ENABLERS LONGING AND BELONGING
20. SECOND-HAND CLOTHES a. CHANGES OVER TIME b. ISSUES	CHALLENGE = a new or difficult task or situation that tests sb's ability and skill ISSUE = an important topic that people are discussing or arguing about	LONGING AND BELONGING

<p>21. SHAPE/STYLE</p>	<p>SHAPE = the form of the outer edges or surfaces of sth; an example of sth that has a particular form</p> <p>STYLE = a particular design of sth, for example clothes</p>	<p>SENSORY EXPERIENCES</p> <p>ENABLERS</p>
<p>22. SPACE/STORAGE ISSUES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. CLOTHES STORED AWAY b. MOVING c. QUANTITY 	<p>SPACE = 3. an amount of an area or of a place that is empty or that is available for use; 5. an area that is used for a particular purpose</p> <p>STORAGE = the process of keeping sth in a particular place or form until it is needed; the place or form that sth can be kept in</p>	<p>ENABLERS</p>

	<p>CHALLENGE = a new or difficult task or situation that tests sb's ability and skill</p> <p>ISSUE = an important topic that people are discussing or arguing about</p> <p>Change 22. C to WARDROBE QUANTITIES to align with 1.b? – actually, I don't think this is necessary</p>	
<p>23. TIME</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. CHANGING PATTERNS OF WEAR b. CHANGING PREFERENCES c. FIGURE CHANGES d. FUTURE POSSIBILITIES 	<p>TIME = a period of time, either long or short, during which sth happens or when sb does sth</p>	TIME

	<p>PATTERN = the regular way in which sth happens or is done</p> <p>PREFERENCE = 1. greater interest in or desire for sb/sth than sb/sth else; 2. a thing that is liked better or best</p> <p>POSSIBILITY = 1. the fact that sth might exist, happen, or be true, but is not certain; 2. one of the different things that you can do in a particular situation</p>	
24. UTILITY/PRACTICALITY	<p>UTILITY = the quality of being useful</p> <p>PRACTICALITY (ies) = 1. the real facts and circumstances rather than ideas or theories; 2. the</p>	ENABLERS

	quality of being suitable, or likely to be successful	
25. VERSATILITY	VERSATILITY = missing from dictionary	ENABLERS WARDROBE IN CONTEXT
26. WARDROBE PATTERNS/HABITS a. DIFFERENT b. SAME	WARDROBE = missing from dictionary PATTERN = the regular way in which sth happens or is done HABIT = 1. something that you do often and almost without thinking about it, especially sth that is difficult to change or stop; a person's usual behaviour; 2. a typical way of behaving that sth has; the fact that sth tends to happen in a particular way	LONGING AND BELONGING

<p>27. WARDROBE STORIES</p>	<p>WARDROBE = missing from dictionary</p> <p>STORY = 1. a description, often spoken, of what happened to sb or of how sth happened; 2. a situation considered in terms of the information that is known about it; 3. a description of events and people that the writer or speaker has invented in order to entertain people</p>	<p>LONGING AND BELONGING</p>
<p>28. WEAR&TEAR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. FALLING APART/FALLING TO BITS b. REPAIRABILITY c. REPAIRS/ALTERATIONS 	<p>WEAR = the damage or loss of quality that is caused when sth has been used a lot</p> <p>TEAR = 1. to damage sth by pulling it apart or into pieces or by cutting it on sth sharp; to</p>	<p>TIME</p>

	<p>become damaged in this way; 3. very badly affected or damaged by sth</p> <p>WEAR AND TEAR = the damage to objects, furniture, property, etc. that is the result of normal use</p>	
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Categories and codes - FINAL	
1. AGE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. BODY IMAGE b. WARDROBE QUANTITIES
2. APPROPRIATENESS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. CLIMATE b. CONFIDENCE c. EVERYDAY CLOTHES d. EARLY MOTHERHOOD e. MATERNITY WEAR f. OCCASION WEAR g. OCCASIONS FOR WEAR h. PROFESSIONAL SELF-PRESENTATION i. SPORTSWEAR j. SUITS ME/FLATTERING k. SEASONAL CLOTHES l. TRAVEL m. WORK OUTFITS n. WORK/WEEKEND WARDROBE o. IT WORKS
3. ASSOCIATIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. FEEL b. HOLIDAY CLOTHES c. INVISIBLE GARMENTS d. SOUVENIRS
4. CARE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. IRONING b. ISSUES c. MOTHS d. WASHING
5. CLOTHES SHOPPING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. BRANDS b. CHALLENGES/ISSUES c. CHARITY SHOPS d. E-BAY e. ETHICAL PARADOXES f. FRIENDS g. MEMORIES h. ON-LINE SHOPPING

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. PROVENANCE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. CUSTOM-MADE CLOTHES ii. HOME-MADE CLOTHES/SEWING iii. MASS PRODUCTION iv. SMALL PRODUCTION j. SALES/BARGAINS k. SWAPPING l. TREATS
6. COLOURS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. BRIGHT b. MATCHING c. MUTED
7. COMBINATIONS
8. COMFORT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. DIS-COMFORT b. KNITWEAR c. REVEALING d. SIMPLE e. SOFT f. SOFTENING THROUGH WEAR
9. CONNECTIONS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. CHILDHOOD MEMORIES b. COMMENTS c. FAMILY INFLUENCES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. FATHER ii. GRANDMOTHER iii. MOTHER iv. SISTER d. FRIENDS e. FROM OTHER PEOPLE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. FRIENDS ii. GRANDMOTHER iii. MOTHER iv. MOTHER IN LAW f. GIFTS g. JUSTIFY h. MEMORIES OF WEAR
10. DETAILS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. ELASTIC/DRAWSTRING b. BUTTONS c. COLLAR/NECKLINE d. DROPPED YOKE e. LINING f. POCKETS g. SLEEVES h. SLIT

i. ZIP
11. FIT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. TOO BIG b. TOO TIGHT
12. INSPIRATIONS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. IDEALS/WISHLIST b. FASHION c. FASHION MAGAZINES d. INSTAGRAM/BLOGS e. SARTORIAL/STREET WEAR
13. LENGTH OF OWNERSHIP <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. NEW CLOTHES b. OLD CLOTHES c. STUDENT CLOTHES
14. LETTING GO <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. GETTING RID OF THINGS b. GIVING TO CHARITY c. KEEPING CLOTHES/HANGING ONTO THINGS d. MOVING ON
15. MATERIALS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. CASHMERE b. COTTON c. ELASTIC d. LINEN e. SILK f. SYNTHETICS g. WOOL
16. PATTERNS AND PRINTS
17. PRICE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. AFFORDABLE b. GOOD VALUE/COST PER WEAR c. HIGH/EXPENSIVE d. LOW/INEXPENSIVE
18. SATISFACTION <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. FAVOURITE CLOTHES b. HATED CLOTHES c. LONGEVITY d. MULTIPLE EXAMPLES OF THE SAME e. OFTEN WORN f. QUALITY g. RARELY WORN h. RE-INCARNATIONS/REPLICAS

19. SECOND-HAND CLOTHES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. CHANGES OVER TIME b. ISSUES
20. SECOND THOUGHTS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. SHOPPING MISTAKES b. UNCERTAINTY/DOUBTS
21. SHAPE/STYLE
22. SPACE/STORAGE ISSUES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. CLOTHES STORED AWAY b. MOVING c. QUANTITY
23. TIME <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. CHANGING PATTERNS OF WEAR b. CHANGING PREFERENCES c. FIGURE CHANGES d. FUTURE POSSIBILITIES
24. UTILITY/PRACTICALITY
25. VERSATILITY
26. WARDROBE PATTERNS/HABITS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. DIFFERENT b. SAME
27. WARDROBE STORIES
28. WEAR&TEAR <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. FALLING APART/FALLING TO BITS b. REPAIRABILITY c. REPAIRS/ALTERATIONS

E.3 THEMES AND CATEGORIES 2 (OF 3)

WARDROBE IN CONTEXT	LONGING AND BELONGING	ENABLERS	DETAILS	SENSORY EXPERIENCES	TIME
COMBINATIONS	ASSOCIATIONS	APPROPRIATENESS	DETAILS	ASSOCIATIONS	AGE
VERSATILITY	CONNECTIONS	CARE		COLOURS	FIGURE CHANGES
CONNECTIONS	CLOTHES SHOPPING	COMBINATIONS		COMFORT	LENGTH OF OWNERSHIP
	DIFFERENT	FIT		DETAILS	LETTING GO
	FROM OTHER PEOPLE	PRICE		FIT	TIME
	INSPIRATIONS	SATISFACTION		MATERIALS	WEAR&TEAR
	PROVENANCE	SECOND THOUGHTS		PATTERNS	
	SATISFACTION	SHAPE/STYLE		SHAPE/STYLE	
	SECOND THOUGHTS	SPACE/STORAGE ISSUES		SUITS ME	

	SECOND-HAND CLOTHES	SUITS ME			
	SUITS ME	UTILITY/PRACTICALITY			
	WARDROBE PATTERNS	VERSATILITY			
	WARDROBE STORIES	WORK/WEEKEND WARDROBE			

F. CONSENT DOCUMENTS

Information for participants

Informed consent form

Permission to use transcripts and photographs

F.1 INFORMATION FOR PARTICIPANTS

INFORMATION FOR PARTICIPANTS

Note: You are welcome to keep this for future reference.

TITLE OF RESEARCH

CLOTHES THAT STAND THE TEST OF TIME:

The value of emotional durability in fashion design and making

RESEARCHER

Mila Burcikova
Centre for Fashion Thinking
School of Art, Design and Architecture
University of Huddersfield

RESEARCHER CONTACT DETAILS

E-mail: M.Burcikova@hud.ac.uk
Mobile: [REDACTED]
Web: misensefashion.co.uk

INTRODUCTION

Dear [name of participant],

thank you very much for considering taking part in this research.

My name is Mila Burcikova, I am a fashion designer-maker, running my own independent slow fashion studio MISENSE by Mila B. I am currently also working on a postgraduate research project at the Centre for Fashion Thinking, University of Huddersfield.

I am interested in clothes that people keep and wear for a long time. The purpose of my research project is to help designers to better understand how people experience the clothes they have in their wardrobes. I believe that this can help designers to design clothes that bring more satisfaction to people who wear them.

DO I HAVE TO TAKE PART?

Your participation is entirely voluntary and you can decide to withdraw from the research at any point during your interview without giving any reason.

WHAT IS INVOLVED?

I would like to interview you about the clothes in your wardrobe. The interview will take place in your own home at a time to suit you and will take between 2-3 hours. Our discussion will be focused on your experiences of buying and wearing the clothes you own, particularly the pieces you have had for a long time. The interview does not have a formal structure, you can choose the clothes you would like to talk about and run the interview at your own pace.

The interview will be audio recorded and transcribed and you will be given a copy of this transcription for approval. During the interview, I would also like to take photos of the clothes we will be talking about and photos of you handling these clothes during the interview. All the photos will also be given to you for approval.

HOW WILL THE RESULTS BE USED?

The information I collect during your interview will support my research and will be used in my PhD thesis and other research outputs such as conference presentations, journal publications or exhibitions.

CONFIDENTIALITY and ANONYMITY

Several types of data will be collected during this project:

- Your contact details
- Some personal details (such as age, occupation, family situation, geographical area)
- Audio recordings of interviews
- Transcripts of interviews
- Photographs of clothes in your wardrobe that we will talk about
- Photographs of you taken during the interviews

Each type of data will be used and shared in different ways:

- Your contact details, such as phone number, address or e-mail address will be strictly confidential and will not be disclosed to anyone.
- Some personal details, such as your age, occupation or family situation, will be used in the research outputs – including my PhD thesis, journal publications, conference presentations and exhibitions. Your surname will not be used and your first name will be replaced by a pseudonym.

- Audio recordings will only be shared (when necessary) with the project supervisors who agree to preserve the confidentiality of all the information. Audio recordings will not, at any point of the research, be shared beyond the supervisory team.
- Selected parts of your interview transcript will be used in my research outputs – including my PhD thesis, journal publications, conference presentations and exhibitions. You will be given a copy of your transcribed interview for approval prior to any publication or dissemination.
- Photographs of you taken during the interviews and photographs of the clothes we will talk about will be used in the research outputs – including my PhD thesis, journal publications, conference presentations and exhibitions. You will be given an opportunity to withdraw any images that you do not wish to be included.

All the data obtained during the research will be stored securely, in compliance with the UK [Data Protection Act](#) (1998) and ethical research guidelines and principles. Secure storage in password protected files will be maintained for five years after the completion of the project to enable the use of the data generated during this research in any subsequent research. If secure storage is no longer possible, the data will be destroyed.

Any hard copies including data obtained during interviews (such as field notes, audio recordings, prints of photographs) will be kept in a locked cabinet that can only be accessed by myself. No hard copies of your contact details will be used in this research.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR TAKING THE TIME TO READ THROUGH THIS INFORMATION. PLEASE FEEL FREE TO ASK ANY QUESTIONS.

Mila Burcikova

CONTACT

UNIVERSITY:

Centre for Fashion Thinking
School of Art, Design and Architecture
University of Huddersfield

E-mail: M.Burcikova@hud.ac.uk
Mobile: [REDACTED]

STUDIO:

MISENSE by Mila B
slow/fashion/studio

E-mail: mila@misensefashion.co.uk
Mobile: [REDACTED]
Web: misensefashion.co.uk

F.2 INFORMED CONSENT FORM

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

TITLE OF RESEARCH

CLOTHES THAT STAND THE TEST OF TIME
The value of emotional durability in fashion design and making

RESEARCHER

Mila Burcikova
Centre for Fashion Thinking
School of Art, Design and Architecture
University of Huddersfield

RESEARCHER CONTACT DETAILS

E-mail: M.Burcikova@hud.ac.uk
Mobile: [REDACTED]
Web: misensefashion.co.uk

Dear [name of participant],

Thank you very much for considering taking part in my research. I will explain the purpose of my project and any details related to the research process to you before you agree to take part. If you have any questions arising from the **Information for Participants** or explanation already given to you, please ask me before you decide whether to join in. You will be given a copy of the Information for Participants and this Consent Form to keep and refer to at any time.

Mila

Please complete this form **AFTER YOU HAVE READ** the **INFORMATION FOR PARTICIPANTS** and/or listened to an explanation about my research.

I confirm that I understand that **by ticking/initialling each box I am consenting** to this element of the study.

☐

1. I confirm that I have read and understood the **Information for Participants** dated [insert date and version number] for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information and asked questions which have been answered satisfactorily.

☐

2. I understand that my participation in this project is entirely voluntary and I am free to withdraw at any time during the interview without giving any reason.

☐

3. I understand that I will be able to withdraw my data up to [insert text defining the limit – e.g. 4 weeks after my interview].

☐

4. I consent to the processing of my personal information for the purposes explained to me in the **Information for Participants**. I understand that such information will be handled in accordance with the terms of the UK Data Protection Act 1998.

☐

5. I understand that confidentiality will be maintained as specified in the **Information for Participants**.

☐

6. I understand that my first name will be replaced by a pseudonym.

☐

7. I agree to be contacted in the future by Mila who may like to invite me to participate in possible follow up studies to this project.

☐

8. I consent to my interview being audio recorded.

☐

9. I consent to photography during the interview.

☐

10. I understand that my interview will be used in the research outcomes (as specified in the **Information for Participants**) and I will receive a copy of transcripts and photographs for approval prior to any publication and dissemination.

☐

11. I agree to take part in this project.

☐

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR TAKING THE TIME TO COMPLETE THIS FORM.

X

Name of participant:

Date:

X

Name of researcher:

Date:

F.3 PERMISSION TO USE TRANSCRIPTS AND PHOTOGRAPHS

**APPROVAL OF TRANSCRIPTS
AND PHOTOGRAPHS**

TITLE OF RESEARCH

CLOTHES THAT STAND THE TEST OF TIME
The value of emotional durability in fashion design and making

RESEARCHER

Mila Burcikova
Centre for Fashion Thinking
School of Art, Design and Architecture
University of Huddersfield

RESEARCHER CONTACT DETAILS

E-mail: M.Burcikova@hud.ac.uk
Mobile: [REDACTED]
Web: misensefashion.co.uk

Dear [name of participant],

thank you very much for taking part in my project. The information I collected during your interview will support my research and will be used in my PhD thesis and other research outputs such as conference presentations, journal publications or exhibitions.

Mila

1. I confirm that any parts that I wish to be omitted from my interview transcript have been highlighted in the COPY OF TRANSCRIPT attached to this document.

☐

2. I confirm that any images that I do not want to be used in the research outputs have been included in the LIST OF IMAGES TO BE REMOVED attached to this document.

☐

OPTIONAL:

3. I give permission to use photographs from my personal archive for the purposes specified above. Hard copies are attached to this document and I understand that any digital copies of these photographs given to the researcher will be stored securely in password protected files as specified in the **Information for Participants**.

☐

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR TAKING THE TIME TO COMPLETE THIS FORM.

X

Name of participant:
Date:

X

Name of researcher:
Date: